JOHN CASSIAN: THE INSTITUTES

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JOHN CASSIAN: THE INSTITUTES

TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY BONIFACE RAMSEY, O.P.

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TO MOTHER MARGARET MARY AND THE POOR CLARES OF PERPETUAL ADORATION IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

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Abbreviations

CCSL Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina. Tournhout, 1953ff.

Conlat. Conlationes, which is the Latin title for *The Conferences* of John Cassian.

CSCO Corpus Scriptorum, Christianorum Orientalium. Louvain, 1903ff.

DACL *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*. Paris, 1907–1953.

Daremberg-Saglio Charles Daremberg and Edmond Saglio, eds. *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines*. Paris, 1877–1919.

DS *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*. Paris, 1932–1994.

Gibson Gibson, Edgar C. S. "John Cassian" in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, series 2, vol. ii, Grand Rapids, 1982.

LXX Septuagint.

Pauly-Wissowa G. Wissowa et al., eds. *Paulys Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Stuttgart, 1893ff.

PG J.-P. Migne, ed. Patrologia Graeca. Paris, 1857–1866.

PL J.-P. Migne, ed. Patrologia Latina. Paris, 1844–1855, with supplementary vols.

RAC *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*. Stuttgart, 1950ff.

Stewart Columba Stewart. *Cassian the Monk* (Oxford Studies in Historical Theology). New York/ Oxford, 1998.

Taft Robert Taft. *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today*. Collegeville, MN, 1986.

Weber Hans-Oskar Weber. *Die Stellung des Johannes Cassianus zur ausserpachomianischen Mönchstradition: Eine Quellenuntersuchung* (Beiträge zur Geschichte des alten Mönchtums und des Benediktinerordens 24). Münster, 1960.

A List and Explanation of Some Terms Used Throughout *THE INSTITUTES*

Abba A transliteration of the Aramaic word for "father," adopted in Egypt and used as a title of respect.

Apostle, the A common way of referring to St. Paul.

Bursar A translation of *oeconomus*.

Cenobium Defined in *Conlat.* 18.10, this Latin word, taken from the Greek, connotes a group of monks living together with a common rule. Plural: *cenobia*.

Chosen orientation A translation of *propositum*, which refers to the monk's decision and determination to lead the monastic life.

Institutes Cf. p. 4.

Integrity A translation of *integritas,* which refers here to sexual purity, as in book 5f.

Monastery Defined in *Conlat*. 18.10, this is simply a dwelling, whether for one monk or for many.

Steward A translation of *dispensator*.

Synaxis A transliteration of the Greek word for "assembly." It applies to a gathering for prayer, during which some work could be done, as mentioned in 2.12.2ff.

Thebaid, the A vast area in upper (or southern) Egypt, occupying approximately one-half of the ancient diocese, or administrative unit, of Egypt and divided into two parts—Thebais Prima and Thebais Secunda. The region was mostly desert.

Way of life A translation of *conversatio*.

PREFACE

This translation of Cassian's *Institutes* is intended to complement the translation of the same author's *Conferences,* which recently appeared in a previous volume in the present series. Ideally, *The Institutes,* being the earlier work, should have been published first, but for various reasons that could not be. Now, in any event, the two treatises can be read completely and in their proper order.

Michael Petschenig's critical edition of *The Institutes,* published in 1888 as volume seventeen of the Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, has served as the basis for the present translation. I have occasionally looked at and found helpful both the French translation of J.-C. Guy in the Sources chrétiennes edition and the English of Edgar C. S. Gibson in the series Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (in which the sensibilities of a century ago militated against the inclusion of the sixth book). But I have striven for something a bit more literal than is had in either of those two renditions.

Many thanks are due to Sister Mary Ann, O.P., of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in North Guilford, Connecticut, for volunteering to transfer my manuscript of the translation to a word processor. She has been an immense help to me in regard to both *The Conferences* and *The Institutes.* I also wish to thank Dennis McManus for his unstinting encouragement and for guiding the production of this book to its completion.

I dedicate this volume to a convent of sisters who have treated me over the years with the greatest generosity and hospitality, and whose collective sense of humor seems to match my own.

Boniface Ramsey, O.P.

Saint Vincent Ferrer Priory

New York City

8 August, 1999

Feast of St. Dominic

1

INTRODUCTION

The Institutes—or, to give the treatise its full title, *The Institutes of the Cenobia and the Remedies for the Eight Principal Vices*—is the first written work of a man whose influence on Western monasticism, and hence by extension on Western civilization, was to be formidable. John Cassian seems to have been born in Dacia (now known as Romania) about the year 360. He left his native land while in his twenties or thirties and, with his friend Germanus, joined a monastery in Bethlehem. From there, still with Germanus, he twice visited Egypt in order to acquaint himself with the riches of Egyptian monasticism. It was from Egypt that the two friends departed for Constantinople. Cassian's history, never quite clear, becomes still more unclear at this point. Suffice it to say that John Chrysostom ordained him to the diaconate shortly after the year 400, that he went to Rome some time later on a mission in behalf of Chrysostom, that he was ordained to the priesthood there by Pope Innocent I, and that he eventually made his way to Marseilles. In Marseilles he founded two monasteries and wrote three treatises —*The Institutes,* its longer companion work *The Conferences,* and a christological effort entitled *On the Incarnation of Christ against Nestorius.* He died, it would appear, in the early 430s.

Egyptian monasticism in both its anchoritic and cenobitic forms made a profound impression on Cassian. He seems to have known a number of major monastic figures in the region around Alexandria, although he never traveled to the monastic settlements in the Thebaid, much further to the south. It is the wisdom of the Egypt that he knew that he purports to reproduce in *The Institutes* and *The Conferences,* filtered through his own mind and memory at least twenty years after he had been there. Cassian admits, in praef. 4 of the former, that he can no longer remember everything he saw and heard in Egypt, and this admission cannot

be taken merely as a literary device. Of course, the question is not simply how much he remembered but also how much he chose to remember, and what he consciously changed. Although Cassian may often be a reliable witness to some aspects of Egyptian monasticism, such reliability should not be taken for granted. The concluding lines of the preface to *The Institutes* (praef. 8f.) indicate that he was willing to exercise at least some flexibility in the account that he gives.

Cassian is straightforward in explaining what he sets out to do in *The Institutes*. In praef. 7 he declares that he will eschew marvelous deeds and concentrate instead on the institutes and rules of the Egyptian monasteries, as well as on the eight principal vices and their remedies. This is the plan to which he hews with admirable consistency throughout the treatise. It should be noted, however, that two separate tasks are at issue here. The purpose of the first four books (dealing with the institutes and rules) and that of the remaining eight (dealing with the vices) are quite different from one another, and no attempt is even made to reconcile them. At the beginning of the fifth book, which initiates his discussion of the vices, Cassian simply states that he has accomplished the first of his tasks and is now embarking on the second. This joining of two (or more) apparently unrelated themes in a single work was not unknown in Christian antiquity: Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata* comes to mind, along with Augustine's *Confessions,* the last three books of which strike a somewhat different chord than the first ten. Hence, to refer to this work of Cassian's merely as *The Institutes* is somewhat misleading, however convenient it may be; it is also *The Remedies.*

Indeed, "institutes" itself has a misleading ring to it, for the word conjures up something else today than it did in antiquity. The Latin *institutum* would perhaps better be rendered as "teaching," "instruction," or even "'guiding principle," with the connotation of something established, determined, approved,

worthy of being handed on. If the term "institute" has been maintained it is because of its venerableness rather than because of its accuracy.

The institutes that Cassian hands on to posterity in the first three books touch on monastic garb and monastic prayer. The number of pages devoted to the former topic is an indication of its importance. For Cassian, the monk's apparel is not merely apparel; it is also, and perhaps more significantly, symbol. The second and third books deal with daytime and nighttime prayer. Among liturgists these books are especially well known for the light that they shed—all too flickeringly, it could be complained— on the origins of the liturgy of the hours.

These three books are concerned with externals. So Cassian himself says in 1.1.1, where he declares that he must deal with the monks' "outward appearance" *(exteriorem ornatum)* before he can treat of their "inner worship" *(interiorem cultum)*. By "inner worship" he does not seem to mean the prayer that is spoken of in Books 2–3, for in 2.9 he qualifies that as pertaining to the outer man, and he does the same in *Conlat.* 1 praef. 5. "Inner worship" is not discussed until *Conlat.* 9–10.

But, even though Cassian does not distinguish it in this regard from the other three, the fourth book does not partake of this external quality. It is, rather, a general account of the Egyptian monastic ethos, gleaned from several sources, including information on the reception of a person seeking entrance into a monastery. If any single virtue stands out in the first thirty chapters of this book, it is obedience, an obedience that stops at nothing, if such be required. Here are found stories, for instance, of watering a dry stick, of throwing away a jar of precious oil, even of a father's tossing his own son into the Nile—all done at the command of an elder and all commanded in order to test obedience, which seems to be identified with humility in 4.29–30.1.

The final chapters of the fourth book contain a discourse

attributed to Abba Pinufius, one of the most famous of the elders and a model of self-abnegation, on the occasion of the reception of a new monk. Running from 4.32 to 4.43, Pinufius's words may be considered the heart of *The Institutes* and, indeed, perhaps of both of Cassian's monastic writings. They contain a brief epitome of monastic spirituality, sounding the themes of renunciation, mortification, humility, patience, and perfection. The heart of this discourse, in turn, is almost surely the thirty-fifth chapter, in which the monk is compared to a crucified man whose sole preoccupation is with his approaching death and the liberation it will bring. The discourse, and the book, ends with a succinct summary of Pinufius's instruction, which documents the ascent to perfection. That ascent terminates with the acquisition of purity of heart and, with it, the perfection of apostolic love. Thus this first section of *The Institutes* concludes with a mention of that great quality, purity of heart, whose acquisition and practice dominate *The Conferences.*

The fifth to twelfth books, as has been noted, are taken up with the eight principal vices and how to counter them. Cassian received this list of vices from his mentor, Evagrius Ponticus, who added an eighth to a catalogue of seven that he had himself inherited and about which he wrote in several treatises with great acuity, although not so extensively as our author. Cassian speaks of the same vices in *The Conferences,* most especially in the fifth conference, but, although there is occasional overlapping, the purposes of the two treatments are somewhat different. *The Institutes* tend more to provide an exposition of each vice and its remedy, along with examples. The fifth conference, on the other hand, is inclined more to abstraction. It discusses the parts of the various vices and the relationships among the vices, and examples are reduced to a minimum. In both places the vices are treated in the same order, however, beginning with gluttony and concluding with pride.

One metaphor runs throughout these eight books. Introduced in 5.12, it is that of the monk as an athlete who must contend (in keeping with the thought expressed in 2 Tm 2:5) lawfully in the contests. What "lawfully" means is explained in 5.12ff. and especially in 5.17, where Paul's athletic imagery is used extensively. But what is understood here is that struggling lawfully implies following the logical order of battle laid down by Cassian. This order proceeds from the most carnal of the vices to the most spiritual of them. Gluttony claims the first place according to this schema not only because, of course, it is rooted in corporeality but also because the body cannot do without the food that tempts it to sin. Pride is the most spiritual because it is above all an inner thing, nourished within, even though it may sometimes be qualified as "carnal."

Perhaps the most familiar passage in *The Institutes*—and, indeed, in all of Cassian's writings—is to be found in 10.2. This justly renowned chapter is a description of the symptoms of acedia, and it shows Cassian at his best. Here is a sampling of his remarkable psychological acuity, or at least of the powers of observation that he focused to such good effect on the human condition. Here is also a touch of a sense of humor, which is a rarer although not unheard-of quality of his, or rather perhaps of a detached amusement at human frailty and its attempts to justify itself.

It is psychological insight in particular, in tandem with a remarkable ability to organize his material and present it systematically, that contributes to making Cassian such a striking figure among the fathers of the Church. Few writers of ancient Christianity deal with their topics in so overtly programmatic a fashion as he does. Indeed, this is more the case with *The Institutes* than with its sequel, *The Conferences,* where the connection between the various conferences could initially appear somewhat arbitrary. Not only that, but the structures of the individual conferences are usually less apparent at first glance, and a first-

time reader could be forgiven for thinking that Cassian tends to wander. *The Institutes* are more taut, as a rule, and restrict themselves more explicitly to the matter at hand. The difference between the two treatises is at least partly to be explained, of course, by the dialogical or conversational schema that the later work follows, which is not part of the plan of *The Institutes.*

If *The Conferences* is the greater work, as it is judged to be, that is for several reasons. It is ultimately the more comprehensive of the two treatises, touching on far more aspects of the monastic life than does *The Institutes,* which limits itself to a few topics. In *The Conferences,* too, the goal of monastic life—namely, purity of heart—is kept in view in a way that it is not (or even intended to be) in the earlier work. *The Conferences* offers a feeling for the desert, so integral to Egyptian monasticism, that cannot be obtained from reading *The Institutes.* Finally, as has been noted that Cassian himself observes, the earlier work is about things external and the latter about things more at the heart of the monastic vocation. The fourth book of *The Institutes,* however, breaks this pattern in some form or other in every respect: There the scope is large; a thrust is enunciated for monastic life (although in terms of obedience rather than of purity of heart); the spirituality specific to the desert, if not necessarily the desert itself, is clearly apparent; and the emphasis, as has been said, is on the interior rather than on the exterior.

Yet the present work is certainly great as well, not only because of its grasp of psychology and its systematic approach to the topics it treats but also because of its detail, its thoroughness, its depth. And, of course, it is a companion piece to *The Conferences* and hence a part of a whole that, precisely as a whole, knows no parallel in ancient Christian literature.

The Institutes

CASSIAN'S PREFACE TO *THE INSTITUTES*

1. The history of the Old Testament relates that the most wise Solomon—after he had received from God "exceedingly great wisdom and prudence and a breadth of heart like the countless sands of the sea,"1 such that by the Lord's testimony it is said that no one was like him in times past and that no one like him would ever arise in the future2—wished to build that magnificent temple for the Lord and that he requested the help of the king of Tyre, a foreigner. When Hiram, the son of a widow, had been sent to him,3 he undertook whatever splendid thing the divine wisdom suggested to him with respect to the Lord's temple and the sacred vessels, and thanks to his assistance and oversight he brought it to completion.

2. If, therefore, the princedom that was loftier than all the kingdoms of the earth, and the noble and excellent scion of the Israelite race, and the divinely inspired wisdom that surpassed the skills and institutes of all the people of the East and all the Egyptians4 by no means disdained the advice of a poor foreigner, rightly also do you, most blessed Pope Castor, instructed by these examples, deign to summon me in my utter want and poverty to collaborate in your great work. You are setting out to construct a true and spiritual temple for God not out of unfeeling stones but out of a community of holy men,5 one that is not temporal and corruptible but eternal and impregnable; and you also desire to consecrate very precious vessels to the Lord, not forged out of the dumb metal of gold or silver and afterwards captured by the Babylonian king and set apart for the pleasure of his concubines and princes6 but out of holy souls that shine in the fullness of innocence, righteousness, and chastity and that bear within themselves the indwelling Christ the king. 3. Since your wish is to establish in your own province, which lacks such things, the institutes of the Eastern and especially of the Egyptian cenobia,

inasmuch as you yourself are accomplished in every virtue and in knowledge and are so laden with all spiritual riches that not only your speech but your very life is a sufficient and abundant example to those who seek perfection, you request and demand that I too, rude and wanting in word and knowledge, contribute something from my poor intelligence to the accomplishment of your desire and lay out in order, however inexpertly, the institutes of the monasteries that we have seen observed throughout Egypt and Palestine, such as they were handed down to us there by our fathers. In this you are not looking for a pleasing style, with which you yourself are particularly gifted; rather, you are concerned that the simple life of holy men be explained in simple language to the brothers in your new monastery.

4. Even though the devout ardor of your desire spurs me on to cooperate in this undertaking, there are still numerous difficulties and obstacles that hinder me from complying, however willing I may be. First, my native talents are not such as to make me confident that I could, in spirit and mind, grasp as befits them matters that are at once so complex, so obscure and so holy. Second, we can no longer remember completely the things that we tried to do or learned or saw from our youth on up, when we were living among those men and were inspired by their daily exhortations and example; many years have gone by since we left their company and the imitation of their way of life. And, in particular, the reasoning behind what was done then could never be handed on or understood or conjured up by means of leisurely meditation or verbal teaching. 5. For the whole of it consists in experience and practice alone, and just as such things cannot be handed on except by an experienced person, so neither can they be grasped or understood except by someone who has striven to learn them with like zeal and effort. But if they are not continually discussed and refined by frequent conferences with spiritual men, they quickly slip back into oblivion due to mental neglect. In the third place, whatever we are able to recall as best we can, not

because of its own worth but because of our present condition, will have little explanatory value since it will be poorly expressed. You may add to this the fact that men of outstanding character, endowed with speech and knowledge, have already produced many works on this topic; I refer to the holy Basil, to Jerome, and to several others. The former of these, when asked by the brothers about different institutes and questions, responded with testimony from Holy Scripture in language not only eloquent but abundant, whereas the latter not only wrote books springing from his own genius but even made translations from Greek into Latin. 6. Coming after these men's overflowing rivers of eloquence, I would not unjustifiably be considered presumptuous for trying to produce a few drops of water were I not spurred on by my confidence in your holiness and by the assurance that these trifles, such as they are, will be acceptable to you and that you will forward them to the community of brothers who live in your new monastery. If perchance we have said something carelessly, let them reread it attentively and put up with it indulgently, being on the lookout rather for the truth of my words than for attractive language.

7. Hence, most blessed pope, unparalleled model of devotion and humility, having been encouraged by your prayers, I shall undertake to the best of my ability the work that you enjoin, and things that have been left utterly untouched by our predecessors, because they tried to describe what they heard rather than what they experienced, I shall relate to those who are athirst for the truth in what is as it were a fledgling monastery. Nor shall I strive to weave a tale of God's marvelous works and miracles. Although we have not only heard of many of these and other incredible doings from our elders but have even seen them produced before our very eyes, we are nonetheless omitting all of them: Apart from wonderment they contribute nothing to the reader's instruction in a perfect life. Instead I shall faithfully attempt to explain, as well as I can with the Lord's help, just the institutes of these men and the rules of their monasteries and, in particular, the origins and causes

and remedies of the principal vices, which they number as eight, according to their traditions. 8. For my plan is to say a few things not about the marvelous works of God but about the improvement of our behavior and the attainment of the perfect life, in keeping with what we have learned from our elders. I shall also try to satisfy your commands in this regard: If I ascertain that something is perhaps not in conformity with the model established by the immemorial contribution of our forebears but was subtracted or added in these regions by the arbitrary decision of a founder of a monastery, then you can rely on me to include it or not if it is consistent with the rule—which we experienced—of the ancient monasteries of Egypt and Palestine. I do not at all believe that a new constitution in the West, in Gaul, could be more reasonable or indeed more perfect than what has already been instituted in those parts where monasteries founded by holy and spiritual fathers at the time when the apostles started preaching remain even to our own day. 9. I shall take it upon myself, however, to inject some moderation into this little work. Thus, what I discern in the rule of the Egyptians to be impossible or hard or arduous for this country, because of either a harsh climate or difficulty and diversity of behavior, I shall temper somewhat by recourse to the customs of the monasteries in Palestine and Mesopotamia, for, if reasonable possibilities are offered, the same perfection of observance may exist even where there is unequal capability.

Textual References

1. 1 Kgs 5:9. 1.
2. Cf. 1 Kgs 3:12.
3. Cf. 1 Kgs 7:13–14.
4. Cf. 1 Kgs 5:10.
5. Cf. 1 Pt 2:5.
6. Cf. Dn 5:2.

Notes to the Text

praef. 1 The Old Testament: *Veteris instrumenti. Instrumentum* was not an uncommon term to use in referring to either one or both Testaments. Cf. *Conlat.* 10.10.3, 14.10.2 (with the relevant note), 17,19.2.

praef. 2 Pope Castor was bishop of Apta Iulia in Narbonensis Secunda, now Apt in Vaucluse in France. "Pope" was a common title for a bishop at this time. Castor's death in 426 sets a *terminus ad quem* for the composition of *The Institutes.*

praef. 2ff. A reference to the author's own intellectual poverty and poor writing ability, as in this section, is a literary commonplace and is found elsewhere in Cassian in *Conlat.* 1 praef. 3, 10.1, 2 praef. 2, 17.30.3, 24.26.18, and *De incarn.* praef.

praef. 4f. For the great importance of experience as teacher in Cassian, also alluded to in praef. 7, cf. the note at *Conlat.* 3.7.4.

praef. 5 The Basil spoken of here is the bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, known as "the Great" (c. 330–379). His most significant monastic writings are the *Longer Rules* and the *Shorter Rules,* and it is these that seem to be referred to.

Jerome (331?–c. 420) was himself a monk, and much of his corpus consists in monastic literature of one sort or another. In 404 he translated Pachomius's *Rule* and eleven of his letters, Horsiesi's *Doctrina de institutione monachorum,* and a number of other noteworthy monastic texts from Greek into Latin.

praef. 7 After having spoken favorably of his predecessors in praef. 5f., Cassian seems to undercut their authority when he writes here that "they tried to describe what they heard rather than what they experienced." He is perhaps referring specifically to Jerome (rather than, e.g., to Basil, whose

positive influence on Cassian was great): Jerome's views on Egyptian monasticism were extreme and widely disseminated, but they were based, oftentimes, on secondhand information. Cf. Steve Driver, "From Palestinian Ignorance to Egyptian Wisdom: Jerome and Cassian on the Monastic Life," *American Benedictine Review* 48 (1997): 293–315, esp. 312.

Cassian's promise that he will omit miracles as contributing "nothing to the reader's instruction in a perfect life" is more or less faithfully kept both here and in *The Conferences*. Cf. the conclusion of the introductory remarks to *Conlat.* 15.

praef. 8 Monasteries founded...when the apostles started preaching: This phrase alludes to the myth of the apostolic origins of monasticism that originated with Cassian and that is developed in 2.5.1ff. and *Conlat.* 18.5 and 21.30. Cf. the introductory remarks to *Conlat.* 18.

praef. 9 Cassian's announcement that he will temper his presentation of Egyptian monasticism by having recourse to Palestinian and Mesopotamian practices is at least implicitly consonant with the oft-expressed view of *The Conferences* that these practices left something to be desired in comparison with their Egyptian counterparts. Cf. 4.1f.(?), 4.14f.(?); *Conlat.* 3.22.4, 5.12.3, 17.3ff., 18.2.2ff., 19.1.3ff., 21.11. Palestine was the site of Cassian's first monastic experience. Mesopotamia was a region roughly northeast of Syria and between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers.

FIRST BOOK: THE GARB OF THE MONKS

Chapters

I. The monk's belt.

II. The monk's garment.

III. The Egyptians' hoods.

IV. The Egyptians' colobia.

V. Their cords.

VI. Their *mafo rtes*.

VII. The *melotis* and the goatskin.

VIII. The Egyptians' staffs.

IX. Their footwear.

X. On the moderation of observance that should be established in accordance with the climate or the custom of the region.

XI. The spiritual belt and its deeper meaning.

I. 1. As we start to speak of the institutes and rules of monasteries, where could we better begin, with God's help, than with the very garb of the monks? After having exposed their outward appearance to view we shall then be able to discuss, in logical sequence, their inner worship. And so, it is proper for a monk always to dress like a soldier of Christ, ever ready for battle, his loins girded.

2. For the authority of Holy Scripture makes it clear that those who in the Old Testament were responsible for the beginnings of this profession—namely, Elijah and Elisha—went about dressed in this way. And we know that thereafter the leaders and authors of the New Testament—namely, John, Peter, and Paul and other men of the same caliber—behaved likewise. When the first of these, who already in the Old Testament manifested the flower of virginity

and examples of chastity and continence, was sent by the Lord to remonstrate with the messengers of Ahaziah, the sacrilegious king of Israel, because when he was sick he sent them to consult Baal-Zebub, god of Ekron, about the state of his health, and the prophet met them and said that he would never get out of the bed in which he was wasting away, the smitten king realized who he was as soon as he learned how he was dressed. 3. For when the messengers returned to him and informed him of the prophet's words, he asked them about the appearance and clothing of the man who had met them and spoken like that, and they replied: "He was a hairy man, and his loins were girt with a leather belt."1 From his clothing the king at once pictured the man of God, and he said: "It was Elijah the Tishbite."2 He clearly recognized the man of God by his belt and by the hairy and unkempt aspect of his body because, among so many thousands of Israelites, this particular style was always associated with him; it was as it were a kind of trademark of his.

4. The evangelist also says as follows about John, who served as a sort of sacred boundary between the Old and New Testaments and who was an end and a beginning: "This John wore a garment of camel hair and a leather belt around his loins."3 Likewise, when Peter was thrust into prison by Herod and was going to be put to death the following day, he was ordered by an angel who stood by: "Put on your belt and sandals."4 The angel of the Lord would certainly not have admonished him to do this if he had not seen that he had freed his weary members for a short while of the accustomed constraint of his belt in order to get a night's rest. 5. So, too, when in Caesarea the prophet Agabus met Paul going up to Jerusalem, on his way to being put in chains by the Jews, he took his belt and bound his own hands and feet in order to show by this gesture of his what he would suffer, and he said: "Thus says the Holy Spirit: This is how the Jews will bind the man whose belt this is and hand him over to the Gentiles."5 The prophet would surely not have been able to speak out and say "the man whose belt this

is" if Paul had not been in the habit of always putting it around his loins.

II. 1. In addition, the monk's garment should only be such that it covers the body, countering the shame of nakedness, and prevents the cold from doing harm, not such that it nurtures seeds of vanity or pride. In the words of the same Apostle: "Having food and covering, let them be satisfied with these."[6] He says "covering" and not "vesture," which some Latin editions say incorrectly. This means only what may cover the body, not what may flatter it by its splendid style. Thus it should be commonplace, so as to be indistinguishable in terms of novelty of color and cut from what is worn by other men of this chosen orientation; in no respect should it be self-consciously meticulous, but neither, on the other hand, should it be grimy with filth accumulated by neglect; finally, it should be different from the apparel of this world in that it is kept completely in common for the use of the servants of God. 2. For whatever is arrogated by one or a few within the household of God and is not owned universally by the whole body of the brotherhood is superfluous and overweening and hence must be judged harmful and a token of vanity rather than a display of virtue. Therefore, examples that we see have been handed down neither by the holy ones of old, who laid the foundations of this profession, nor by the fathers of our own time, who are in their turn maintaining their institutes even to the present, it behooves us also to cut off as superfluous and valueless. 3. Hence they utterly rejected sackcloth as showy and conspicuous to everyone and for that very reason as not only being unable to confer any benefits on the spirit but even as containing the possibility of begetting a vain pride, besides being unsuited for and inappropriate to the exercise of the necessary work for which a monk must be ever ready and unhindered.

Still, even if we have heard that some upright persons have dressed in this piece of clothing, it is not for us to establish a rule

for the monasteries or to overturn the ancient decrees of the holy fathers because a few persons, presuming on the privilege of other virtues, are held to be blameless even when they have acted arbitrarily and not in keeping with the Catholic rule. For the opinion of a few must not be preferred to nor must it prejudice the common practice of all. 4. For we ought in every respect to bestow an unshakable faith and an unquestioning obedience not on those institutes and rules that were introduced at the wish of a few but on those that were long ago passed on to later ages by innumerable holy fathers acting in accord. And it should certainly not have any effect on our daily way of life that Jehoram, the sacrilegious king of Israel, is said to have been wearing sackcloth beneath his garment when, surrounded by enemy troops, he tore it,7 or that the Ninevites dressed in rough sackcloth in order to mitigate the judgment of God that had been pronounced against them by the prophet.8 For the former clearly wore this underneath and hiddenly in such a way that it could never have been known by anyone unless his outer garments had been torn, and the latter bore with a sackcloth covering at a time when all were grief-stricken at the imminent destruction of the city and were going about in the same apparel and no one could be accused of display, for sameness is inoffensive when there are no unusual distinctions.

III. There are some other things in the garb of the Egyptians that pertain not so much to the well-being of the body as to the regulation of behavior, so that the observance of simplicity and innocence may be maintained even in the very character of their clothing. Thus, day and night they always wear small hoods that extend to the neck and the shoulders and that only cover the head. In this way they are reminded to hold constantly to the innocence and simplicity of small children even by imitating their dress itself. Those who have returned to their infancy repeat to Christ at every moment with warmth and vigor: “Lord, my heart is not exalted, nor are my eyes lifted up. Neither have I walked in great things nor

in marvels beyond me. If I thought not humbly but exalted my soul, like a weaned child upon its mother."9

IV. They also wear linen colobia that barely reach the elbows and, for the rest, leave the hands free. The cutting off of their sleeves is to suggest that they have cut off the deeds and works of this world, and the wearing of linen clothing is to teach them that they have utterly died to a worldly way of life, that thus they may hear the Apostle addressing them daily: "Put to death your members that are on earth."10 Their very dress proclaims this as well: "You have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."11 And: "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."12 And: "The world has been crucified to me and I to the world."13

V. They wear thin ropes, too, which are braided with a double thickness of wool. These the Greeks refer to as ἀναλαβοι, but we may call them cinctures or strings or, to be correct, cords. They descend from the top of the neck, separate on either side of the neck, go around the folds at the armpits, and are tucked up on both sides, so that when they are tightened the garment's fullness may be gathered close to the body. Thus their arms are freed, and they are unimpeded and ready for any activity as they strive wholeheartedly to fulfill the Apostle's precept: "These hands have labored not only for me but also for those who are with me."14 "Nor did we eat anyone's bread for free, but we worked night and day in labor and weariness, lest we burden any of you."15 And: "If anyone does not wish to work, neither should he eat."16

VI. After this they cover their necks and also their shoulders with a short cape, striving after both modest style and cheapness and economy. In this way they avoid the cost of coats and cloaks as well as any showiness. These are called *mafortes* in both our language and theirs.

VII. The last pieces of their outfit are a goatskin, which is called a *melotis* or a *pera,* and a staff. These they carry in imitation of those who already in the Old Testament prefigured the thrust of

this profession. Of them the Apostle says: "They went about in *melotis* and goatskin, needy, in distress, afflicted, the world unworthy of them, wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and caverns of the earth."17 This garment of goatskin signifies that, once all the turbulence of their carnal passions has been put to death, they must abide in the most elevated virtue and no willfulness or wantonness of their youth and of former fickleness must remain in their bodies.

VIII. That the same men also carried a staff is taught by Elisha himself, who was one of them, when he spoke to his servant Gehazi and sent him to raise up the woman's son: "Take my staff; run and go and place it on the boy's face and he shall live."18 The prophet would certainly not have given this to him to take if he were not accustomed to carry it about constantly in his hand. The carrying of it is, in a spiritual sense, a warning that they must never go out unarmed in the midst of the numerous barking dogs of the vices and the invisible beasts of the evil spirits, from which blessed David begs to be freed when he says: "Lord, do not deliver over to the beasts the soul of one who trusts in you."19 Rather, when they rush upon them they must beat them back by the sign of the cross and drive them far away, and when they rage against them they must destroy them by constantly recalling the Lord's suffering and by imitating his dying.

IX. 1. But they refuse shoes as being forbidden by gospel precept,20 even when bodily infirmity or a winter morning's chill or the intense midday heat demands them, and they only put sandals on their feet. They understand that this use of them, with the Lord's permission, means that if, once having been placed in this world, we cannot be utterly removed from the care and worry of this flesh and are unable to be completely rid of it, we should at least provide for the necessities of the body with a minimum of preoccupation and involvement. Thus we should not allow the feet of our soul, which must always be ready for the spiritual race and

for preaching the peace of the Gospel (with which we run after the odor of the ointments of Christ,21 and of which David says: "I ran in thirst,"22 and also Jeremiah: "But I was not troubled when I followed you"23), to be entangled in the deadly cares of this world —namely, by thinking of what caters not to the needs of nature but to superfluous and harmful pleasure. 2. This we shall accomplish if, in the words of the Apostle, "we do not make provision for the flesh in its desires."24 But although they legitimately use sandals, since they were conceded by the Lord's decree,25 they nonetheless do not allow them on their feet when they approach to celebrate or to receive the most holy mysteries, considering that they must keep literally what was said to Moses and to Joshua the son of Nun: "Undo the strap of your sandal, for the place on which you stand is holy ground."26

X. We have said all of this so that it might not seem that we have left out anything concerning the Egyptians' garb. But we ourselves should keep only those things that the situation of the place and the custom of the region permit. For the harshness of the winter does not allow us to be satisfied with sandals or colobia or a single tunic, and wearing a little hood and having a *melotis* would evoke derision rather than edification in the beholder. Hence we are of the opinion that, of the things we have mentioned above, we should wear only what is in keeping with the humility of our profession and the character of the climate, so that the whole point of our clothing may not consist in strangeness of apparel, which might be offensive to persons of this world, but in decent simplicity.

XI. 1. Clothed, then, in these garments, the soldier of Christ should know first that he is protected by being bound with a belt so that he may be not only mentally prepared for all the exercises and works of the monastery but also unimpeded by his garb itself. For the more zealous he is in the pursuit of obedience and toil, the more fervent he will be proven in purity of heart with respect to

spiritual progress and the knowledge of divine things. 2. Second, he should also be aware that in this very piece of clothing—his belt—there is no small mystery impinging upon him. For girding his loins and encircling himself with dead skin means that he is bearing about the mortification of his members, which contain the seeds of wantonness and lasciviousness, and he always understands that the gospel precept which declares "Let your loins be girt"[27] pertains to him by way of the apostolic interpretation, namely: "Put to death your members that are on earth—fornication, impurity, wantonness, evil desire."[28] 3. Hence we read in Holy Scripture that only those in whom the seeds of sexual intercourse were extinct were girt with a belt. These are the ones who repeat by deed and virtuous disposition the phrase of blessed David: "I have become like a wineskin in the frost,"[29] because once their flesh has been purged of vices from within they can stretch the dead skin of the outer man in the power of the Spirit. And therefore he intentionally added "in the frost" because they will never be satisfied with the mortification of the heart alone but, by the frost of abstinence that comes from without, will also have frozen the movements of the outer man and even the impulses of nature to the extent that, according to the Apostle, they do not permit the reign of sin in their mortal bodies[30] or carry about a flesh that resists the Spirit.[31]

Textual Reference

1. 2 Kgs 1:8a.
2. 2 Kgs 1:8b.
3. Mt 3:4.
4. Acts 12:8.
5. Acts 21:11.
6. 1 Tm 6:8.
7. 2 Kgs 6:30.
8. Cf. Jon 3:5

9. Ps 131:1–2.
10. Col 3:5.
11. Col 3:3.
12. Gal 2:20.
13. Gal 6:14.
14. Acts 20:34.
15. 2 Thes 3:8.
16. 2 Thes 3:10.
17. Heb 11:37–38.
18. 2 Kgs 4:29.
19. Ps 73:19 LXX.
20. Cf. Mt 10:10.
21. Cf. Sg 1:3.
22. Ps 62:5.
23. Jer 17:16 LXX.
24. Rom 13:14.
25. Cf. Mk 6:9.
26. Ex 3:5; Jos 5:15.
27. Lk 12:35.
28. Col 3:5.
29. Ps 119:83.
30. Cf. Rom 6:12.
31. Cf. Gal 5:17.

Notes to the Text

1.1ff. The first symbolical account of the monastic habit is to be found in Evagrius, *Ep. ad Anatolium.* Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 3.14, describes the garb of the Egyptian monks as well, but in less detail. For a general treatment of early monastic garb, cf. Philippus Oppenheim, *Das Mönchskleid im christlichen Altertum* = *Römische Quartalschrift,* Supplementheft 28 (Freiburg i. B, 1931).

1.1 On the symbolism of the belt and on its relationship to chastity, both here and in 1.11, cf. RAC 12.1233–1236, 1258–1261.

1.1.1 That the Christian in general and the monk in particular is a soldier of Christ is a commonplace of early Christian literature. Consult the relevant note at *Conlat.* 1.1 and cf. also *Inst.* 1.11.1, 2.1, 2.3.2, 4.5, 5.19.1, 5.21.1, 7.21, 10.3, 11.3, 11.7.

1.1.2 Both Elijah and Elisha, mentioned here as having inaugurated the monastic profession, were oft-cited models of the ascetic life in Christian antiquity. Cf. *Conlat.* 14.4.1 (with the relevant note), 18.6.2, 21.4.2. Elijah was also widely seen as an exemplar of virginity. Cf. 6.4.1 and *Conlat.* 21.4.2 (with the relevant note). John the Baptist is referred to in Jerome, *Ep.* 22.36, as the first of the anchorites.

The association of virginity and flowers is a commonplace. Cf. Methodius of Olympus, *Symposium,* passim.

1.1.4 That John the Baptist serves as a boundary between the Old and New Testaments is a commonplace. Cf. DS 8.185.

The examples and scriptural texts used here also appear in Basil, *Reg. ad monachos* 11 (PL 103.504).

1.2.1 The reasons adduced here for wearing clothing, along with a citation of 1 Tm 6:8, can also be found in Basil, *Reg. ad monachos* 11 (Pl 103.503); idem, *Reg. fus. tract.* 22. One of the reasons—namely, protection against the elements—is cited in Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 2.10 bis. 106.3; both are given in Jerome, *Ep.* 107.10. Among the different Latin versions of the verse in question may be noted: *Habentes itaque exhibitionem et tegumentum* (Cyprian, *Ad Quirinum* 61); *Habentes autem victum et vestitum* (Basil, *Reg. ad monachos* 11[PL 103.503], in Rufinus's translation); *Victum et tegum entum habentes* (Augustine, *Enarr.*

in Ps. 6.12). Cassian himself has *operimenta* ("covering") rather than *vestimenta* ("vesture"). What seems here to be a fairly insignificant and even arbitrary distinction marks the difference, as he will make clear in the subsequent lines, between purely functional wear, or "covering," which is appropriate for a monk, and more elaborate dress, or "vesture." It is curious to see, however, that, when he cites 1 Tm 6:8 again in 7.11 and 7.29, he has apparently forgotten the point that he made previously and uses *vestimentum* rather than *operimenta.* In this context it is instructive, and even amusing, to see how greatly, in the ancient Church, the use of the slightest variation in the commonly accepted scriptural text could evoke consternation. Cf. Augustine, *Ep.* 71.3.5; Sozomen, *Hist. eccl* 1.11.

1.2.2 Universally: *Catholice.*

1.2.3f Sackcloth was common monastic apparel, as texts too numerous to mention indicate. That it could be worn in an ostentatious display of humility was not unknown. Cf. Jerome, *Ep.* 22.27. It is significant that, although Cassian rejects the use of sackcloth, he leaves himself open to charismatic exceptions.

1.3 Small hoods: *Cucullis perparvis.* On the use of the *cuculla* by children and persons of low status, cf. Daremberg-Saglio 1.2.1577–1579; as a symbol of grace and innocence, cf. Weber 69–70.

The innocence and simplicity of small children: Cassian is somewhat ambivalent in this regard in 7.3.1. The image of the return to infancy is usually associated with baptism, and as such it appears particularly strikingly in Maximus of Turin, *Serm.* 54f. This is of course in turn related to the idea of the Church as mother and of baptism as (re)birth. Cf. Jean

Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame, 1956), 47–49. It is perhaps strange that Cassian does not take advantage of the monastic imagery here to draw some connection with its baptismal counterpart. Similar opportunities seem to have been missed in 4.5 and *Conlat.* 1.1, for which cf. the relevant notes. On the other hand, it may be that Cassian is thinking in terms of Mt 18.3 (as could be the case in 2.3.2), which does not necessarily have baptismal implications.

1.4 *Colobia:* The colobium was a long tunic-like garment, either short-sleeved (as here) or with no sleeves at all.

The wearing of linen, as presented in these lines, seems to suggest immortality, which is consonant with the general early Christian view. Cf. Walter Burghardt, "Cyril of Alexandria on 'Wool and Linen,'" *Traditio* 2 (1944): 484–486; Johannes Quasten, "The Garment of Immortality: A Study of the 'Accipe vestem candidam,'" in *Miscellanea liturgica in onore di S.E. il Card. Giacomo Lercaro* (Rome, 1966), 1.391–401. In 3.3.5, however, Cassian seems to part with this view by declaring, without explanation, that "linen...indicates death." Cf. the relevant note.

1.6 The *mafors* was originally worn by women in particular. Cf. Daremberg-Saglio 3.2.1494. The wearing of a cape or cloak may be an oblique allusion to Elijah. Cf. 1 Kgs 19:19; 2 Kgs 2:13. There is clearly such an allusion in Athanasius, *V. S. Antonii* 91; Jerome, *V. S. Pauli* 12.

1.7 *Pe ra* ordinarily refers to a leather satchel suspended from one shoulder by a strap. Cf. Daremberg-Saglio 4.1.386. That is obviously not its meaning here, however. Heb 11:37–38, which is cited here, is also used in a monastic context in *Conlat.* 18.6.2 and 21.4.2.

From Cassian's somewhat unclear commentary on the use

of a goatskin we are perhaps expected to understand that the goatskin itself is an image of vice and that hence the wearing of it would remind monks of the former "turbulence of their carnal passions." If this is the case, it is in keeping with the common symbolism of the time. Cf. Johannes Quasten, "Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Exorcism of the Cilicium," *Harvard Theological Review* 35 (1942): 209–219.

1.8 The sign of the cross was (and is) very commonly used in an apotropaic way. Cf. *Conlat.* 8.18.2 and the relevant note.

1.9.2 The practice of wearing shoes or sandals when celebrating or receiving the eucharist seems to have varied in Christian antiquity. For example, the Riha Paten and the Stuma Paten, both Byzantine works and both dating from the late sixth century, show the apostles barefoot as they receive communion from the hands of Christ. On the other hand, the illuminated Rossano Gospels, another Byzantine production from roughly the same period, depicts a similar scene in which the apostles are shod.

1.10 Cassian's concern here to avoid evoking derision through a literal observance of Egyptian customs is paralleled in *Conlat.* 8.3.4, where he notes that a literal interpretation of Mt 10:38 by some monks had as its consequence not edification but mockery.

1.11.1 Purity of heart, as revealed at the very beginning of *The Conferences,* is the goal of the monk.

1.11.2 Wearing dead skin in the form of a leather belt was an image of death or mortification inasmuch as leather symbolized death. Cf. Quasten, "The Garment of Immortality," 4.

1.11.3 Cassian's brief allusion to the possibility of controlling not only one's heart (i.e., one's desires) but even one's body in the realm of the sexual is elaborated in *Conlat.* 12.7.6ff.

SECOND BOOK: THE CANONICAL METHOD OF THE NIGHTTIME PRAYERS AND PSALMS

Chapters

I. The canonical method of the nighttime prayers and psalms.

II. The difference in the number of psalms to be sung, as this has been determined in each region.

III. The maintenance of a uniform rule throughout Egypt, and the selection of those who are placed over the brothers.

IV. That throughout Egypt and the Thebaid the number of psalms is set at twelve.

V. That the fixing of the number of the psalms at twelve was received from an angel.

VI. The custom of having twelve prayers.

VII. The manner of praying.

VIII. The prayer that follows the psalm.

IX. The character of prayer, which will be discussed more fully in the conferences of the elders.

X. That, among the Egyptians, prayers are said with great silence and brevity.

XI. The manner in which the psalms are said by the Egyptians.

XII. Why the others at the synaxis sit while one does the psalmody, and how zealously thereafter they prolong their wakefulness in their cells until daybreak.

XIII. Why it is not proper to sleep after the nighttime office.

XIV. How, when they are in their cells, they both work with their hands and pray.

XV. That, in keeping with the law of modesty, each person retires to his own cell at the end of the prayers, and how

someone who does otherwise is rebuked.

XVI. That no one is permitted to pray with someone who has been suspended from prayer.

XVII. That the one who wakes the brothers for prayer is supposed to arouse them at the proper time.

XVIII. That from Saturday evening until Sunday evening, as well as during the whole season of Pentecost, there is no kneeling.

I. I. Now that he is girt with the twofold belt that we have spoken about, the soldier of Christ should know what method for the canonical prayers and psalms was determined in times past in the regions of the East by the holy fathers. But we shall speak of their character and of how we can, in the words of the Apostle, pray "without ceasing"[1] in their proper place, when we have, with the Lord's help, begun to set out the conferences of the elders.

II. 1. For we have found that many persons in different places—following their own ideas and possessing, as the Apostle says, "a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge"[2]—have established different models and rules for themselves in this matter. Some, for example, have thought that each night they should say twenty or thirty psalms and that these should be drawn out with the singing of antiphons and the addition of certain melodies, while others have tried to exceed that number and a few have opted for eighteen. We know that in this way different canons have been established in different places, and we have seen nearly as many models and rules being used as we have seen monasteries and cells. 2. There are those who have also thought that in the daytime offices of prayer—that is, at terce, sext, and none—the number of psalms and prayers should correspond to the number of the hours when these services are rendered to God. Some have believed that six should be assigned to each of the gatherings of the day. Hence I consider it necessary to lay out the most ancient constitution of the fathers, which is being observed by the servants of God even

until now throughout Egypt, so that the uninstructed infancy in Christ of your new monastery may be initiated in the most time-tried customs of the most ancient fathers.

III. 1. And so, throughout Egypt and the Thebaid, where monasteries are not established at the whim of a single renunciant but remain through a succession of elders and their traditions even to the present day and are founded to stay, we see that the correct number of prayers is maintained in the evening gatherings and at the night vigils. For no one is allowed to rule over a community of brothers, or even over himself, unless he not only gets rid of all his possessions but also recognizes that he is in fact not his own master and has no power over himself. 2. For a person who renounces this world and who possessed property and wealth should desire to live in the cenobium in such a way as never to flatter himself by reason of what he has either left behind or brought into the monastery. He should be obedient to all as one who realizes that, in the words of the Lord, he must return to his former infancy[3] and claim nothing for himself out of consideration for his age or on account of his many years, which he reckons as lost because they were foolishly wasted in the world; rather, because he is beginning afresh and because of the newness of the basic training that he knows that he is undergoing in Christ's militia, he should not hesitate to submit himself even to those who are younger than he. 3. Likewise, he is so obliged to accustom himself to toil and labor as to be able to forget the pleasures of his once-prideful life and to acquire a humble heart by wearisome effort when, in keeping with the Apostle's precept, he prepares a daily meal for himself or for his visitors.[4]

Therefore no one is chosen to rule over a community of brothers unless, before he himself exercises authority, he has learned by obedience how he should command those who will be subject to him and has understood from the institutes of the elders what he should pass on to the young. 4. For they declare that to rule well

and to be ruled well is typical of the wise person, and they insist that this is a most lofty gift and a grace of the Holy Spirit. They say that a person cannot enjoin beneficial precepts on his subjects unless he has first been instructed in every virtuous discipline, and that someone cannot obey an elder unless he has been consumed with the fear of God and has been perfected by the virtue of humility. 5. We notice that this is why there are different models and rules in use in other regions—largely because we dare to rule over monasteries when we are ignorant of the elders' teachings and because we declare ourselves abbas before we profess ourselves disciples, as is right, being readier to demand that our own whims be honored than that the considered teaching of our forebears be observed.

But although we wanted to set forth the manner of prayer that it is best to observe, we were drawn more intensely to the institutes of the fathers, and in our precipitous excitement we have anticipated the account that we were reserving for its proper place. Now, then, let us return to our plan.

IV. Therefore, as we were saying, the number of twelve psalms is maintained throughout all of Egypt and the Thebaid in both the evening and the nighttime services in such a way that, when they are finished, two readings follow, one from the Old and one from the New Testament. This number, which was set in the distant past and which is inviolate in the monasteries of those regions even until now, has been kept for so many centuries because the elders declare that it was not established by human whim but was given to the fathers from heaven by the teaching of an angel.

V. 1. For in the early days of the faith few indeed—but they were very upright—were regarded as monks, and they had received that form of life from the evangelist Mark of blessed memory, who was the first to rule as bishop over the city of Alexandria. They not only retained then those magnificent qualities that we read in the Acts of the Apostles were originally cultivated by the Church and

by the throngs of believers (namely, “The multitude of believers had one heart and one soul, and none of them said that anything that he possessed was his own, but all things were common to them. For as many as owned fields or houses sold them and brought the price of what they sold and laid it at the feet of the apostles, and this was distributed to each just as each had need”5) but to these they even added things far more lofty. 2. For they went off to quite secluded places on the outskirts of the city and led a strict life of such rigorous abstinence that even those who did not share their religion were astonished at the arduous profession of their way of life. For day and night they gave themselves over to the reading of Holy Scripture, to prayer, and to manual labor with such fervor that the very appetite for and memory of food only disturbed them every second or third day, when their bodies felt hunger, and they would take food and drink not so much out of desire as out of necessity. Indeed, they would not do this before sunset, so as to link the daytime with the pursuit of spiritual meditation but the care of the body with the night. And other things they did that were far more lofty than these. 3. Whoever has heard less about these matters from the telling of those who are familiar with them can be taught by the Church’s history.

At that time, then, when the perfection of the primitive Church remained inviolate and was still fresh in the memory of succeeding generations, and when the faith of the few had not yet been spread among the multitude and grown lukewarm, the venerable fathers, reflecting with unceasing concern on those who would follow them, came together to discuss what form daily worship should take throughout the whole body of the brotherhood. Thus they would transmit to their successors a legacy of devotion and peace that was free of any contentious strife, for they feared that in the daily services, among men who were participating in the same worship, some discord or difference might arise and that sometime thereafter it would burst forth into error or rivalry or hurtful schism. 4. And as each one was recommending, in accordance with

his own fervor and heedless of his neighbor's weakness, that what he judged easiest for himself in view of his faith and strength should be mandated, taking little account of what would be most possible for all the brothers (necessarily including a very large proportion of the sick also), and as they were contending in various ways to settle upon an enormous number of psalms, each one in keeping with his ability, some fifty and others sixty psalms, while still others who were not even content with this number were suggesting that it should be surpassed, there was among them such a holy division in their pious struggle on behalf of the rules of religion that the moment for the most sacred evening service intruded upon the discussion. As they were getting ready to carry out the daily rites of prayer, someone in their midst arose to sing the psalms to the Lord. 5. And when all were seated, as is still the custom throughout Egypt, and had fixed the full attention of their hearts upon the cantor's words, he sang eleven psalms that were separated by the interposition of prayers, all the verses being pronounced in the same tone of voice. Having finished the twelfth with an Alleluia as a response, he suddenly withdrew from the eyes of all, thus concluding both the discussion and the ceremony.

VI. Thereupon the venerable gathering of fathers understood that, at the Lord's willing, a universal rule had been established for the groups of the brothers through the teaching of an angel, and they determined that this number was to be observed at both the evening and the morning assemblies. To this they joined two readings—that is, one from the Old and another from the New Testament; this was their own doing and as it were optional, and they added them only for those who wished and who were eager to reflect on Holy Scripture by assiduous meditation. But on Saturday and Sunday they do both readings from the New Testament—that is, one from the Apostle or the Acts of the Apostles and another from the Gospels. On all the days of Pentecost this is also done by those whose concern is the reading and recalling of Scripture.

VII. 1. They begin and end the aforementioned prayers, then, such that once the psalm is finished they do not immediately rush to kneel down, as some of us do in this region who hasten to go down for prayer when the psalm is not yet completely over and hurry to get to the conclusion as quickly as possible. Even though we want to exceed the number that was set of old by our forebears, we count how many psalms there are still left and we are anxious to be done with them; we think more of giving our tired bodies a rest than of pursuing the profit and the benefit of prayer. 2. This is not their way, however: Before they kneel they pray briefly, and while standing they pass the greater part of the time in supplication. After this they fall on the ground for a very short time, as if only adoring the divine mercy. Then they get up very quickly and, erect once more and with hands outstretched as they had been when they were standing in prayer before, they linger over their prayers. For they say that the person who is lying upon the ground for too long is attacked not only by distractions but even, more seriously, by sleep. 3. Would that we ourselves did not know the truth of this from experience and daily usage—we who very often want this same bending of our limbs to be extended still longer for the sake not of prayer but of repose! But when the person who is about to say the prayer has arisen from the ground, all stand up at the same time. Thus no one is moved to bend the knee before he does, and no one dares to dally once he has arisen from the ground, lest anyone give the impression that he has made his own conclusion rather than having heeded that of the person who says the prayer.

VIII. In this province we have also seen that when one person is concluding the psalm all get up and sing aloud the "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit." This we have never heard anywhere in the East. And when the psalm has been finished by the one singing, while all are silent, the prayer follows, although the antiphon only ends, as a rule, with this glorification of the Trinity.

IX. 1. The sequence of institutes brings us next to the method of canonical prayer, whose fuller treatment, however, we shall reserve for the conferences of the elders, dealing with it at greater length there when we have begun to examine its character and incessancy in their own words. Nonetheless I think it necessary, as the occasion offers and given the opportuneness of this place in our account, to touch upon a few things at present so that, once we have sketched the activity of the outer man and as it were laid a kind of foundation for prayer (which we are doing now), we may with less effort later on, when we have begun to discuss the condition of the inner man, reach the pinnacle of his prayer. 2. We are particularly concerned here that if the end of our life should overtake us and cut us off from this account, which we want to finish in good time, God willing, we may at least leave you in this work the rudiments of material that is very necessary—you to whom everything is a delay because of your ardent desire. Thus, as long as time is still given us in this life, we shall at least as it were trace the lines of prayer that may serve as something of a guide especially for those who dwell in cenobia. 3. We are likewise intent that those who will perhaps encounter only the present treatise and be unable to get to the other one may find at least some instruction here with regard to the character of prayer and that, just as they have been taught about the garb and the clothing of the outer man, so also they may not be ignorant as to how he should appear when offering spiritual sacrifices. For the present books, which we are now setting ourselves to toil over, with the Lord's help, will be better suited to the behavior of the outer man and to the teaching of the cenobia, whereas the others will pertain rather to the discipline of the inner man and perfection of heart, and to the life and teaching of the anchorites.

X. 1. When they come together, then, to celebrate the aforementioned services (which they call synaxes), everyone is so silent that, even though such a large number of brothers has gathered, one would easily believe that no one was present apart from the

person who stands to sing the psalm in their midst. This is especially the case when the prayer is concluded. Then there is no spitting, no annoying clearing of throats, no noisy coughing, no sleepy yawning emitted from gaping and wide-open mouths, no groans and not even any sighs to disturb those in attendance. No sound is heard other than the priest concluding the prayer, except perhaps that which escapes by an ecstasy of the mind from the gate of the mouth and steals up all unawares on the heart, enkindled by the extreme and unendurable heat of the Spirit when what the mind, once inflamed, cannot keep within itself attempts to escape by a kind of ineffable groan issuing from the inmost chambers of the breast. 2. But they declare that the person who is lukewarm in mind and who prays loudly or makes any noise such as we have already mentioned, and particularly if he is overcome by yawning, sins doubly—in the first place because he is guilty of offering his prayer negligently, and second because by his unrestrained clamor he is also creating a distraction for someone else who would perhaps have been able to pray more attentively. And so they advise that there be a quick conclusion lest, if we tarry over it, some excess spittle or phlegm perhaps interrupt the ecstasy of our prayer. 3. Hence while it is still fervent it must be snatched as it were from the jaws of the enemy who, although he is always hostile toward us, is without doubt far more hostile when he discerns that, in opposition to him, we want to offer our prayers to the Lord. Then, with different thoughts and moods that he has stirred up, he attempts to distract our mind from its intended supplication, thus trying to make our initial fervor lukewarm. For this reason they consider it more advantageous that prayers be quite brief but very frequent—on the one hand so that by entreating God frequently we might be able to cling to him constantly, while on the other so that by a pointed brevity we might be able to dodge the lurking devil's darts, with which he is determined to strike us especially when we pray.

XI. 1. Therefore they do not attempt to do the very psalms

themselves, which they sing when they come together, in unbroken fashion. Instead they divide them into small and separate parts, in two or three sections, interspersed with prayers, in accordance with the number of the verses. For it is not a multitude of verses but rather the understanding of the mind that pleases them, and this they pursue with all their strength: "I shall sing with the spirit and I shall sing with the mind as well."[6] 2. Hence they consider it better to sing ten verses with a modicum of comprehension than to pour out the whole psalm with a distracted mind, which is what often happens due to the alacrity of the one who is singing because, when he thinks of the character and number of the psalms that still remain to be sung, he does not try to convey the different meanings to his hearers but speeds up in order to conclude the synaxis.

And if one of the younger men begins to sing more than is called for, either on account of a fervent spirit or because he has not yet been trained, the cantor is interrupted in mid-course by the elder, who claps his hands from the place where he is seated and makes everyone rise for the prayer. He is constantly on the watch lest those who are seated fall prey to tedium because of the length of the psalms, by which the singer would not only lose the fruit of understanding for himself but would also cause a loss for those whom he made bored of the synaxis because of his longwindedness.

3. They are also very careful that no psalm be said with an Alleluia as a response except that which is introduced by an Alleluia in its title. But they divide the twelve psalms mentioned previously in such a way that if there are two brothers they sing six each; if three, four; and if four, three. They never sing with fewer than this at their gathering, and likewise, however large a number may have come together, never more than four brothers sing during the synaxis.

XII. 1. Indeed, they lighten this canonical number of twelve

psalms, which we have already spoken about, with bodily repose in this way: When celebrating these same services in their gatherings according to custom, all settle down on very low seats, apart from the one who has gotten up in their midst to sing the psalms, and they give their heart's undivided attention to the cantor's voice. For they are so worn out from fasting and from working the whole day and night that, if they were standing and were not helped by this kind of rest, they would in fact be unable to get through the number in question. 2. For they do not let any time pass without performing a task, because they not only strive to do at every moment with their hands those things that the daylight permits but they also search with anxious mind for those kinds of work that the very darkest shades of night cannot hinder, in the belief that they will acquire a loftier insight into spiritual contemplation with a pure mind the more intently and zealously they focus on work and toil. And so they consider that a moderate number of canonical prayers was divinely established in order that for those of more ardent faith there might be kept a space of time in which their virtue could run its tireless course without lengthiness also creating tedium for bodies that are exhausted and weary.

3. Hence, when the canonical prayers have been accomplished according to custom and each one has returned to his own cell, which is allowed to be inhabited by only one or two persons whom a common task or instruction in discipleship and discipline has joined or whom at least a likeness of virtue has made equal, they again celebrate the more eagerly a service of prayers as their own particular sacrifice, and none of them gives in anymore to reposeful sleep until, with the coming of the daylight, the day's work follows upon the night's toil and meditation.

XIII. 1. In addition to believing that they are offering a sacrifice to God of the fruit of their hands, which they make every effort to do, they keep up this labor very observantly for two other reasons. It behooves us also, if we are striving for perfection, to be

observant with equal diligence in the same respect: First, so that the hateful enemy, jealous of our purity and always lying in wait for it and continually attacking it, might not by some phantasm of sleep sully the cleanness that we have acquired by nightly psalms and prayers. 2. After we have made reparation for our negligence and oversights and have begged pardon in our confession with an outpouring of groans, he strives all the more intently to filthy us if he discovers an unguarded moment, and he tries especially to overthrow and weaken our confidence when he notices that by the purity of our prayers we are inclining more devoutly to God. Thus he always attempts to disgrace in a very brief space of time those whom he was unable to harm during a whole night. 3. But secondly because, although no such dreaded phantasm of the devil may occur, even when a pure slumber comes upon him it begets sluggishness in the monk who will soon wake up. It produces heaviness and torpor in the mind for the whole day, dulling its vigor and clouding that clarity of intellect and impoverishing that richness of heart which would make it possible for us to remain wary and strong throughout the day in the face of all the enemy's snares. Hence to the canonical vigils they join private watchfulness, and this follows upon the former with greater carefulness, so that the cleanness that has been acquired by psalms and prayers may not be destroyed and so that nightly meditation may make ready a more attentive solicitude to guard us during the day.

XIV. And therefore they do these things in tandem with their work, lest sleep be able to creep up on them as if they were idle. For just as they reserve hardly any time for leisure, so neither in fact do they place a limit on spiritual meditation. For they practice equally the virtues of body and of soul, balancing the profit of the outer man with the gain of the inner. On the heart's slippery movements and thought's unstable undulations they fasten the weight of toil as a kind of steadying and immovable anchor, and, once the shifting and roving character of the heart has been fixed

to it, it can be kept within the confines of the cell as if in a most secure harbor. In this way the vigilant mind, intent only on spiritual meditation and watchful of its thoughts, is not only not permitted to fall into agreement with some wicked suggestion but is even held back from every useless and idle thought. The upshot is that it is hardly possible to determine what depends on what here—that is, whether they practice manual labor ceaselessly thanks to their spiritual meditation or whether they acquire such remarkable progress in the Spirit and such luminous knowledge thanks to their constant labor.

XV. 1. When the psalms are finished, then, and the daily gathering, as we noted previously, has broken up, none of them dares to linger or to chat for a while with anyone else. Nor, indeed, does anyone presume during the course of the day to leave his cell or to quit the work that he is accustomed to do in it, unless perhaps they are called out for the performance of some kind of urgent task. Once they have gone outside they accomplish this in such a way that hardly any conversation is carried on among them, but each one does his assigned task while going over a psalm or some scriptural text by memory. Thus he gives none of his talents or his time to harmful schemes or to wicked plots, nor even to idle gossip, since both his mouth and his heart are constantly busied with spiritual meditation. 2. For the greatest care is taken that no one, and especially the young men, be seen even for a short while lingering with or going off anywhere with someone else or holding hands together. But if, contrary to the discipline of this rule, any persons are discovered to have committed one of these forbidden acts, they are declared to be insolent, breakers of the law, and guilty of no small fault, and they may even be under suspicion of wickedly scheming and plotting. Unless they have absolved this fault by a public repentance in the presence of all the brothers, none of them is allowed to take part in the brothers' prayer.

XVI. Indeed, if anyone has been suspended from prayer for some

misdeed that he has committed, no one at all has permission to pray with him until he has done penance on the ground and his reconciliation and pardon for the thing committed have been granted publicly by the abba, in the presence of all the brothers. They separate themselves and cut themselves off from fellowship in prayer with him in this way because they believe that he who is suspended from prayer has been, according to the Apostle, delivered over to Satan.7 And whoever is moved by ill-considered kindness and presumes to communicate with him before he has been received back by the elder makes himself an accomplice in his damnation, for he willingly delivers himself over to Satan, to whom the other had been consigned for the correction of his fault. In this, in fact, he commits a much more serious crime, because by joining with the other in conversation and prayer he produces in him the beginnings of arrogance, and he makes the wrongdoer's stubbornness worse. For by offering him a destructive consolation he hardens his heart more and more and does not allow it to be humiliated, which is why he had been cut off, and in this way he makes him consider the elder's rebuke as insignificant and ponder his reparation and pardon in a manipulative fashion.

XVII. But he who is entrusted with arousing the religious community and caring for the synaxis does not presume to awaken the brothers for the daily vigils whenever he pleases or whenever he wakes up at night or as he happens to be moved by his own sleepiness or sleeplessness. Instead, although daily habit may compel him to wake up at a particular time, nonetheless from the position of the stars he carefully and frequently watches for the time appointed by the community and calls them to their service of prayer. Otherwise he may be found careless in one of two ways: He may either oversleep the prescribed hour of the night or anticipate it in his eagerness to go to bed and get to sleep, and it may be said of him that he has not so much looked after the spiritual service and the repose of all as he has catered to his own rest.

XVIII. This too we ought to know: From Saturday evening, which dawns into Sunday morning, until the following evening the Egyptians do not kneel, nor during all the days of Pentecost, and they do not keep the rule of fasting then either. The reason for these things will be explained in their proper place in the conferences of the elders, as the Lord wills. For the present it is our intention simply to offer brief descriptions lest this volume exceed its limits and burden the reader with either aversion or weariness.

Textual Reference

1. 1 Thes 5:17.
2. Rom 10:2.

3 Cf. Mt 18:3 or Jn 3:5.

4. Cf. 1 Thes 4:11.
5. Acts 4:32, 34–35.
6. 1 Cor 14:15.
7. Cf. 1 Cor 5:5.

Notes to the Text

2.1 "The twofold belt" mentioned here was previously referred to in 1.11. It is twofold in that it not only serves the practical purpose ordinarily associated with belts but also has a mystical meaning.

On the image of the soldier of Christ here and on further military imagery in 2.3.2 cf. the note at 1.1.1.

Unceasing prayer is discussed in *Conlat.* 9–10.

2.2.1 With the singing of antiphons: *Antiphonarum... melodiis.* "Antiphons" here seems to refer to psalms sung in antiphonal fashion—i.e., divided between two groups or between two individuals. Hence this could also be translated as "with the

antiphonal singing of psalms." Cf. also 3.8.4. For a different meaning of antiphon cf. the note at 2.8.

2.2.2 The number of psalms and prayers should correspond to the number of the hours when these services are rendered to God: Namely, three at terce, six at sext, and nine at none.

2.3.1 The distinction made between Egypt and the Thebaid, which also appears in 2.4, is roughly the distinction between present-day northern and southern Egypt, the former having been known as Aegyptus and the latter as Thebais. Cf. also 4.1 and the relevant note, as well as a similar distinction made in *Conlat.* 15.4.1.

2.3.2 The danger of flattering oneself because of what one may have contributed to the monastery is mentioned also in 4.4. Cf. the relevant note.

It is uncertain whether Cassian is referring to Mt 18:3 or to Jn 3:5 when he cites "the words of the Lord" with regard to returning to one's infancy. If the first, it would seem here to be merely a question of humility; but if the second, there would in addition be a baptismal allusion that would probably benefit from being made more explicit. Cf. 1.3 and the relevant note.

2.3.3ff. The notion that a person must first be well-governed himself before he can govern others is a commonplace. Cf. Gregory of Nazianzen, Or. 2.78; Cyril of Scythopolis, *V. S. Sabae* 39.

2.5.1ff. This section develops the theme of the apostolic origins of monasticism, already alluded to in praef. 8. It is further developed in *Conlat.* 18.5 and 21.30. There the focal point is Jerusalem, whereas here it is Alexandria.

2.5.1 The tradition that Mark was the first bishop of Alexandria is mentioned for the first time in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.24. Cf. also ibid. 2.16, where he is said to have been the first to establish churches in Alexandria.

2.5.2 Keeping one's fast until sunset was a frequent habit in the desert. Cf. Athanasius, *V. S. Antonii* 7; *Historia monach. in Aegypto* 1.1.

2.5.3 The allusion to the Church's history is perhaps a reference to Philo's description of the Therapeutae as recounted in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.17; Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 1.12.

2.5.3ff. This account of the discussion on the correct number of the psalms by a group of elders, concluding with the intervention of an angel who settles the issue, is somewhat reminiscent of an incident recorded in *Conlat.* 2.2ff. There a group of elders is said to have discussed the most fundamental monastic virtue, and it is Antony who concludes the discussion by explaining how the virtue in question is discretion. In both cases dialogue yields willingly to an undisputed authority.

2.5.5 When all were seated, as is still the custom throughout Egypt: On sitting for the psalmody cf. also 2.11.2 and 2.12.1.

Cantor: *Psallentis.* Cf. also 2.12.1; *Conlat.* 9.26.2. Note that in Egypt, Palestine, and Mesopotamia the psalms were customarily sung by one person, while the others listened. Cf. also 2.11.2ff., 2.10.1, and 3.8.4.

2.6ff. On this section cf. Taft 58–65. It is noteworthy that in the office described here by Cassian there were only two gatherings, in the morning and in the evening; there is no mention of the terce, sext, and none that appear in 2.2.2.

2.7.1 Conclusion: *Missae. Missa* has multiple meanings and can indicate the religious service itself, the conclusion of that service, and the dismissal from that service. Cf. Christine Mohrmann, "Missa," *Vigiliae Christianae* 12 (1958): 67–92. For other instances, cf. 3.5.2, 3.6, 3.7.1, 3.8.2, 3.11, 11.16.

2.7.2 Erect...and with hands outstretched: This was a typical gesture of prayer in Christian antiquity. Cf. Tertullian, *De orat.* 16f.; Origen, *De orat.* 31.2.

2.7.3 The person who is about to say the prayer....The person who says the prayer: *Is, qui orationem collecturus est....Qui precem colligit.* Cf. *Conlat.* 18.11.2.

2.8 "The East" spoken of here is perhaps the civil diocese of Oriens, in which case it would be better translated as "The Orient." Cf. the note at 3.3.1.

Here, unlike in 2.2.1, the term "antiphon" clearly refers to the whole of the psalmody rather than to the manner in which it is sung.

2.9.1 The reference here, as in 2.1, is to *Conlat.* 9–10.

2.9.2 That Cassian should allude to the possibility of his dying before finishing the work at hand means one of two things—either that he really had some reason to fear an imminent death, or that he wished to emphasize the importance of the present section by what is in fact nothing more than a literary device.

2.10.1 The mention of spitting, coughing, and the like at a synaxis anticipates 12.27.2f. and *Conlat.* 23.6.3. With the mind inflamed by the Spirit and the ineffable groan issuing from the depths of one's being, however, we are for a brief moment in the realm of the prayer of the inner man as it is described

in *Conlat.* 9.25.

2.10.2 Loud prayer is also condemned as an annoyance to others in Tertullian, *De orat.* 17.

2.10.3 Augustine, *Ep.* 130.20, speaks with approval of the frequent and brief prayers of "the brothers in Egypt."

2.11.2 The words about singing more than is called for bring to mind some similar, although not identical, words in Augustine, *Praeceptum* 2.4: "Do not sing except what you read should be sung."

2.11.3 The psalms with an Alleluia in their title are, in the Hebrew enumeration, 105–107, 111–114, 116–118, 135–136, 146–150.

The twelve psalms mentioned previously: i.e., in 2.4. and 2.5.5f.

2.12.2ff. That work of some sort was done during the synaxis is noted in Pachomius, *Reg.* 4ff.

2.13.1f. The sullying of the cleanness acquired by nightly psalms and prayers is probably understood to occur through a dream, although the "unguarded moment" of 2.13.2 suggests an element of consciousness. On the morality and significance of sexual dreams cf. 6.10f. and *Conlat.* 12.7.4f.

2.14 They do these things in tandem with their work: i.e., they pray to the accompaniment of their work.

The constant movement of the mind and heart, which results in distractions in prayer, is often discussed in *The Conferences.* Cf. *Conlat.* 1.5.4 and the relevant note.

2.15.1 The memorization and continual repetition of the Scriptures is advised, and the benefits that accrue from doing

this are laid out, in *Conlat.* 14.10.4ff. This continual repetition is referred to a few lines later as "spiritual meditation," which is said to occupy both the mouth and the heart. It is clear from this, and from other desert writers, that meditation was understood to be a repetitive *vocal* rumination on scripture passages. Cf. DS 10.909–910. The process is recommended again in *Inst.* 3.2.

2.15.2 The prohibition against holding hands appears in Pachomius, *Reg.* 95.

2.16 Correction of faults and penance are discussed again in 3.7.1 and 4.16.

2.17 Note that the stars were consulted to determine the time of night waking, rather than an instrument such as a water clock, which would have been available in Cassian's day.

2.18 The rule against both fasting and kneeling on Sunday (beginning at dusk on Saturday) and during Pentecost, the Easter season, is an ancient one. On not fasting or kneeling on Sunday, cf. Tertullian, *De corona* 3; on not fasting during Pentecost, cf. ibid.; and on not kneeling during that season (or on Sunday), cf. idem, *De orat.* 23. But note Cassian's willingness to make an exception to the rule on fasting in 3.10. The reference to *The Conferences* is to 21.11ff.

THIRD BOOK: THE CANONICAL METHOD OF THE DAYTIME PRAYERS AND PSALMS

Chapters

I. The services of the third, sixth, and ninth hours, which are observed in the regions of Syria.

II. That at all hours of the day without distinction the Egyptians devote themselves continually to prayers and psalms and also to work.

III. That throughout the Orient the services at the third, sixth, and ninth hours are done with only three psalms and prayers, and why these spiritual offices have been assigned specifically to these times.

IV. That the morning service was not fixed by an ancient tradition but was instituted in our day for a particular reason.

V. That after the morning prayers no one should go back to sleep.

VI. That nothing in the ancient order of the psalms was changed by the elders when the morning service was instituted.

VII. That someone who is not present at the daytime prayer before the end of the first psalm is not allowed to enter the oratory; at the nighttime prayers, however, lateness is excusable up until the end of the second psalm.

VIII. When and how the vigil which is celebrated the evening before Saturday should be celebrated.

IX. Why a vigil has been set for the evening before Saturday, and why throughout the Orient a break in the fast is conceded on Saturday.

X. How it came about that there is fasting in the City on Saturday.

XI. In what respect the Sunday service differs from the practice on other days.

XII. On the days when supper is set for the brothers the psalm is not said by those who are going to eat, as is usually done at lunch.

I. I think that, by God's help and to the extent that our limited skill was capable, I have explained the method of nighttime prayer and psalms that is observed in Egypt. Now we shall have to discuss the services of terce, sext, and none according to the rule of the monasteries in Palestine and Mesopotamia, as we already mentioned in the preface, tempering with their institutes the perfection of the Egyptians and the inimitable rigor of their discipline.

II. For, among these latter, the offices that we are obliged to render to the Lord at different hours and at intervals of time, at the call of the summoner, are celebrated continuously and spontaneously throughout the course of the whole day, in tandem with their work. For they are constantly doing manual labor alone in their cells in such a way that they almost never omit meditating on the psalms and on other parts of Scripture, and to this they add entreaties and prayers at every moment, taking up the whole day in offices that we celebrate at fixed times. Hence, apart from the evening and nighttime gatherings, they celebrate no public service during the day except on Saturday and Sunday, when they gather at the third hour for Holy Communion. For what is unceasingly offered is greater than what is rendered at particular moments, and a voluntary service is more pleasing than functions that are carried out by canonical obligation. This is why David himself rejoices somewhat boastfully when he says: "Willingly shall I sacrifice to you."[1] And: "May the free offerings of my mouth be pleasing to you, Lord."[2]

III. 1. And so in the monasteries of Palestine and Mesopotamia

and the entire Orient the services at the aforesaid hours are done every day with three psalms in order that assiduous prayer may be offered to God at fixed times and also in order that, by meeting spiritual responsibilities with appropriate moderation, the necessary duties of work may never be impeded. We know that at these three times the prophet Daniel also daily poured out his prayers to the Lord in the upper room, with the windows open.3

Not without reason have these times been assigned more specifically for religious services, since in them was accomplished the fulfillment of the promises and the whole of our salvation. 2. For at the third hour the Holy Spirit, promised by the prophets in ages past,4 is known to have come down for the first time upon the apostles as they were gathered for prayer. When the unbelieving people of the Jews were astounded by their speaking in tongues, which flowed forth from them thanks to an inpouring of the Holy Spirit, and also mocked them, saying that they were full of new wine, Peter stood up in the midst of them and said: "Men of Israel and all you who dwell in Jerusalem, know this, and give ear to my words. For these men are not drunk, as you think, since it is the third hour of the day, but this is what was spoken of by the prophet Joel: It shall happen in the last days, says the Lord, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and even on my servants and handmaids will I pour out my Spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy."5 3. We see that all of this was fulfilled at the third hour and that the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, which was foretold by the prophets, occurred at this same time.

At the sixth hour the spotless victim, our Lord and Savior, was offered to the Father, and mounting the cross for the salvation of the whole world he destroyed the sins of the human race.6 "Despoiling principalities and powers, he delivered them over publicly,"7 and he freed all of us who were subject to and bur-

dened by the record of our unpayable debt, removing it from our midst and fixing it to the trophy of his cross.8 4. At the same hour, likewise, there was divinely revealed to Peter, who was in an ecstasy of mind, the call of the Gentiles by the descent of a gospel container, which came down from heaven, and also the cleanness of all the kinds of living beings in it. This was made known to him by a voice that said to him: "Rise, Peter, kill and eat."9 This container, which descended from heaven by its four corners,10 is clearly understood to signify nothing other than the Gospel. For although it is divided into the four-part narrative of the evangelists and seems to have four beginnings, nonetheless the body of the Gospel is one, for it embraces both the birth of Christ and his Godhead, his miracles as well as his suffering. 5. And very neatly does it say not "linen" but rather "like linen";11 linen in fact indicates death. Since, then, the Lord in his suffering did not undergo death in keeping with the law of human nature but by a decision of his own will, "like linen" is said. For he died according to the flesh but not according to the spirit, because his soul was not left in hell and his flesh did not see corruption.12 And again he says: "No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again."13 6. In this container of the Gospels, then, which was sent from heaven (that is, which was written by the Holy Spirit), all the nations, which were formerly outside the observance of the law and considered unclean, were brought together by belief in the faith so that they might be savingly slain and cut off from the worship of idols and might be of use as salvific food, once they had been cleansed and presented to Peter at the voice of the Lord.14

At the ninth hour15 he penetrated hell and extinguished the inextricable darkness of Tartarus by his shimmering brilliance. He broke open its gates of bronze, smashed its iron bars,16 and, having savingly captured the captivity of the holy ones who had been shut up in the cruel darkness of hell, bore it off with him to heaven,17 thrusting aside the fiery sword and by a devout confes-

sion restoring to paradise its erstwhile inhabitant.[18] 7. Also at the same hour Cornelius the centurion, who by his habitual piety was persistent in prayer, learned from an angel who spoke to him that the offering of his prayers and alms had been received by the Lord. The sacraments of the call of the Gentiles, which had been revealed to Peter in an ecstasy of mind at the sixth hour, were extended to him openly at the ninth hour.[19] In still another place in the Acts of the Apostles it is said with reference to the same time: "Peter and John went up to the temple at the ninth hour of prayer."[20]

8. From this it is perfectly clear that we too should observe these times, which holy and apostolic men not without reason consecrated by religious rites—we who, unless we were compelled as it were by law to fulfill these duties of piety at least at fixed moments, would spend the whole day in forgetfulness or idleness or consumed with activity, without any interval for prayer.

But what should be said concerning the evening sacrifices, which even in the Old Testament were appointed by the Mosaic law to be offered continually?[21] 9. We can prove that morning holocausts and evening sacrifices were unceasingly offered every day in the Temple, although with figurative victims, from the fact that David sings: "Let my prayer come like incense in your presence, the raising of my hands like an evening sacrifice."[22] Here the true evening sacrifice can be understood in a more spiritual way as either that which the Lord, the Savior, delivered to his apostles as they supped in the evening, when he initiated the sacred mysteries of the Church,[23] or as that evening sacrifice which he offered to the Father on the last day—namely, at the end of the ages[24]—by the raising of his hands for the salvation of the whole world. 10. This stretching out of his hands on the gibbet is appropriately called a raising, for all of us who were sunk in hell he raised to the heavens in accordance with his promise, which says: "When I have been lifted up from the earth I will draw all

things to myself."[25]

We are also taught about the morning service by what we are accustomed to sing every day: "God, my God, I look to you from the dawn."[26] And: "In the morning I shall meditate upon you."[27] And: "I anticipated the dawn, and I cried out."[28] And again: "My eyes have anticipated the break of day in order that I might meditate upon your words."[29]

11. At these times, too, the gospel head of the household led his workers into his vineyard. For he is said to have led them in very early in the morning, which signifies our morning service, then at the third, the sixth, and the ninth hours, and finally at the eleventh, by which the hour of the service of light is indicated.[30]

IV. 1. Yet it should be known that this morning service, which is observed now particularly in western lands, was originally instituted as a canonical function in our own time and in our own monastery, where our Lord Jesus Christ was born of a virgin and deigned to go through the stages of his human infancy, and where he strengthened our own infancy in religion, still tender and unweaned, by his grace. For up until that time we find that, when this morning service was finished (which is usually celebrated in the monasteries of Gaul shortly after the conclusion of the nighttime psalms and prayers) along with the daily vigils, the remaining hours were set aside by our forebears for bodily rest. 2. But when those who were somewhat negligent abused this concession and prolonged their period of repose and, indeed, no communal obligation summoned them forth from their cells or up out of their beds before the third hour, and when they were unproductive and sluggish from too much sleep at the time of day when they were responsible for a number of tasks, especially on those days when a heavier torpor struck those who were keeping vigil from the evening until near dawn, then some of the brothers there who were more fervent in spirit and who were no little annoyed by this kind of negligence brought their complaint to the

elders. By them it was decided, after lengthy discussion and careful consultation, that at sunrise, when reading could be done and manual labor pursued without harm, all should be summoned to get out of bed at the same time, after rest had been granted to weary bodies, and should observe the duty of saying three psalms and prayers according to the fashion fixed of old in the observance of terce and sext, in the manner of a triple confession, thereupon at one and the same time terminating sleep and starting work.

3. Although this scheme seems to have been devised in response to a particular circumstance and appears to be quite recent, instead of having been instituted for the reason that we mentioned, nonetheless it corresponds very clearly in a literal way to that number of which blessed David speaks (although it also has a spiritual meaning): "Seven times a day I have praised you for the judgments of your righteousness."[31] For with the addition of this service we come together for these spiritual gatherings seven times a day, and it is evident that we praise the Lord seven times therein. But although this same scheme has come from the Orient and has spread most beneficially all the way here, it does not seem to be accepted, even now, in several very old monasteries in the Orient, which never permit the ancient rules of the fathers to be transgressed.

V. 1. Those who in this province are unaware of the reason why this service was decreed and established, and who go back to sleep after the morning hymns are finished, themselves fall into that situation which our elders sought to suppress by instituting this service. For they rush to finish it at an hour that will offer those who are more negligent and irresponsible the opportunity of returning to sleep. As we explained more fully in the previous book, when we described the synaxis of the Egyptians, this must never happen. Otherwise either an excess of natural moisture may be discharged and sully the purity that we have acquired by our humble confession and by our pre-dawn prayers or an illusion of

the enemy may ruin it, but in any event the rest provided even by a pure and simple sleep will interfere with and interrupt the fervor of our spirit, and those who have been made lukewarm by sleepiness it will thenceforth, for the remainder of the day, render idle and listless.

2. This the Egyptians do not bring upon themselves. Indeed, although they are used to getting up at fixed times even before cockcrow, they prolong their vigil from the celebration of the canonical office up until after dawn, so that when daylight breaks it finds them fervent of spirit, and throughout the day it keeps them still more fervent and careful, maintaining them in readiness for the conflict and, thanks to the practice of the nighttime vigil and spiritual meditation, fortified in the face of the daytime struggle with the devil.

VI. This too we should know—that our elders, who decided that this same morning service should be added, changed nothing with respect to the ancient custom of the psalmody; rather, the office was celebrated in the same way as had always been done before in the nighttime gatherings. For today as well they chant the hymns (which they used in this region at the morning service) in similar fashion at the end of the nighttime vigil, which they are accustomed to concluding after cockcrow and before dawn—namely, Psalm 148, beginning with "Praise the Lord from the heavens,"[32] and the others that follow. But Psalms 50, 62, and 89[33] have been assigned to this new service. Finally, in all the churches throughout Italy today Psalm 50 is sung at the conclusion of the morning hymns, which I do not doubt comes from nowhere else but there.

VII. 1. But he who does not arrive at prayer—at terce, sext, or none—before the first psalm is finished does not dare to proceed further into the oratory or to join those who are singing the psalms. Instead, standing outside, he awaits the dismissal of the congregation, and when everyone has come out, falling to the

ground in repentance, he begs pardon for his carelessness and his tardiness. He knows that he can never expiate his criminal sloth in any other way and that, indeed, he will not be admitted to the service that follows in three hours unless he submits with true humility and hastens to make immediate satisfaction for his present negligence. 2. But in the nighttime gatherings a grace period is offered the latecomer up to the second psalm, provided that, once that same psalm is finished and before the brothers bow down in prayer, he then hastens to join the congregation. Without a doubt he would be subjected to the same correction and repentance that we have already mentioned if he delayed even slightly beyond the prescribed grace period.

VIII. 1. Therefore in wintertime, when the nights are longer, the seniors arrange for the vigil, which is celebrated each week on the evening when Saturday begins, to be had in the monasteries up until the fourth cockcrow. And so, after keeping watch throughout the night, they rest their bodies for the nearly two hours that remain and do not grow faint from sleepiness during the day; they are satisfied with this brief repose in place of rest the whole night through. 2. It will be well for us also to hold very carefully to this, so that, satisfied with the sleep that is conceded to us after the dismissal from the vigil and up until daybreak (that is, up until the morning psalms), we may spend the whole day, from that point on, in work and necessary tasks. Thus we shall not look as if during the day we are seizing upon the sleep that we took from the night, and as if, worn out and tired by our vigil, we seem not so much to have denied slumber to our body as to have relocated our time of rest and our nocturnal repose. For frail flesh will never be able to be deprived of a whole night's rest in this way and, without a weary mind and a heavy spirit, maintain the unbroken wakefulness that will be hindered rather than helped thereby through the following day, unless after the conclusion of the vigil it taste a little bit of sleep. 3. And therefore if at least an hour's rest is taken before daybreak, as we have said, we shall profit from all the hours of the

vigil that we consumed in prayer throughout the night; by giving nature its due we shall not need to seize during the day what we took from the night. For whoever attempts not to withdraw something small from the flesh in reasonable fashion but to deny the whole of it and, to speak more truly, wishes to cut off not superfluities but necessities, will without doubt pay it back in full. 4. Hence a vigil will certainly demand a higher toll if it is with heedless and unreasonable excess drawn out until dawn. Therefore they divide it into three sections, so that the toil that is diversified in this way may cater to the body's frailty with a certain pleasurableness. For when they have sung three antiphons while standing, they then sit on the ground or on very low seats and respond to one man chanting three psalms, which is done individually by individual brothers who take each other's place in turn, and as they are sitting in quiet three readings are added to these. This is how they lessen bodily exertion and carry on their vigil with a more attentive mind.

IX. 1. In the time of the apostolic preaching, when the Christian religion and faith was founded, it was determined throughout the Orient that a vigil should be celebrated at the start of Saturday, because, when our Lord and Savior was crucified on a Friday, his disciples, distraught at his still recent suffering, stayed awake the whole night and gave no repose at all to their eyes. Hence from that time on a vigil service has been assigned to this night, and up to the present day it is observed in similar fashion throughout the Orient. 2. On this account, too, the same apostolic men's abstention from fasting on Saturday, after the exertion of the vigil, is not unjustifiably taken as a mandate in all the churches of the Orient. This is also in keeping with those words from Ecclesiastes that, despite having another mystical meaning, can nonetheless accommodate this one as well. Namely, when it says: "Give a part to these seven and also to these eight"[34] we are commanded to share the same part of the service with both days—that is, with the seventh and with the eighth. 3. For this abstention from fasting

must not be reckoned as a participation in the Jewish feast, especially by those who are clearly removed from all Jewish superstition, but as relating to the rest for a weary body that we have spoken of, because if it fasts regularly for five days every week of the year it is easily wearied and worn out unless it is revived by at least a two-day interval.

X. There are some in a few western countries, particularly in the City, who do not know the reason for this moderation, and they think that this Saturday remission should not be practiced because they assert that the apostle Peter fasted on that day in anticipation of his struggle with Simon. It is clear that he did this not out of canonical custom but obliged by the conflict at hand, since even in this very instance Peter seems to have decreed a special rather than a general fast for his disciples. He would certainly not have done this had he known that such was usually observed by way of canonical custom. Doubtless he would have decreed the same even on a Sunday had the occasion for the struggle presented itself then. Yet from this no canonical rule of fasting should thereupon be promulgated because it was not a general situation that called for it but rather necessity that demanded that it be done once.

XI. But it should not go unknown that on Sunday only one office is celebrated before lunch. Out of respect for the assembly itself and for the Lord's communion they give greater solemnity and weight to the psalms, prayers, and readings, and they reckon that terce and sext are both included therein. Thus, by the addition of readings, nothing is taken away from the obligatory prayers. Yet a certain change of pace and relaxation, more so than at any other time, seems to be conceded to the brothers out of respect for the Lord's resurrection, and this appears to mitigate the observance for the whole week. By reason of this change of pace that is introduced, that day comes to be looked forward to more solemnly as a festal event, and in expectation of it the fasts of the next week are felt less. For fatigue of any kind is more evenly tolerated and

toil is borne without aversion if some variation is interjected and the work schedule is changed in some fashion.

XII. Finally, even on the days (namely, Saturday, Sunday, and feasts) when it is customary for both lunch and supper to be provided for the brothers, a psalm is not said in the evening, neither when they begin supper nor when they get up from it, as is usually the case at solemn meals and at the canonical relaxation of the fast, which fixed psalms customarily both precede and follow. Instead they begin supper after they have said only a simple prayer, and when they get up from it again they conclude with one prayer. For this meal is special among the monks, and no one is obliged to come to it except travelers who have stopped by to see the brothers and those whom bodily sickness or their own desire urges.

Textual References

1. Ps 54:6.
2. Ps 119:108.
3. Cf. Dn 6:11.
4. Cf. Is 44:3.
5. Acts 2:14–18; Jl 3:1–2.
6. Cf. Lk 23:44.
7. Col 2:15.
8. Cf. Col 2:14.
9. Acts 10:13.
10. Cf. Acts 10:11.
11. Cf. Acts 10:11.
12. Cf. Acts 2:31; Ps 16:10.
13. Jn 10:18.
14. Cf. Acts 10:15.
15. Cf. Mt 27:46.
16. Cf. Is 45:2.
17. Cf. Eph 4:8.

18. Cf. Gn 3:24.
19. Cf. Acts 10:3.
20. Acts 3:1.
21. Cf. Nm 28:4.
22. Ps 141:2.
23. Cf. Mt 26:26–29.
24. Cf. Heb 9:26.
25. Jn 12:32.
26. Ps 63:1.
27. Ps 63:6.
28. Ps 119:147.
29. Ps 119:148.
30. Cf. Mt 20:1–6.
31. Ps 119:164.
32. Ps 148:1.
33. Cf. Pss 51, 63, 90.
34. Eccl 11:2 LXX.

Notes to the Text

3.1 The reference here is to praef. 9. On Palestine and Mesopotamia, cf. the note in praef. 9.

3.2 The uniting of manual labor, constant meditation on Scripture, and incessant prayer, all performed in solitude, is already presented as a monastic ideal in Athanasius, *V. S. Antonii* 3. On Cassian's use of the term "meditation," cf. the note at 2.15.1.

For churchgoing on both Saturday and Sunday, cf. also 5.26; *Conlat.* 3.1.1 (with the relevant note) and 18.15.6.

On celebrating the eucharist at the third hour, particularly on Sundays and feast days, cf. Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origin and Development,* trans. Francis A. Brunner (New York, 1951) 1.247.

A voluntary service is more pleasing than functions that are carried out by canonical obligation: Cf. *Conlat.* 21.3ff., esp. 21.3: The devotion of the righteous "is greater than the law's command, because, while carrying out the precepts in their fullness, they add of their own free will to what is obligatory."

3.3.1 From the context it is clear that the Orient spoken of here is the civil diocese of Oriens, which included Palestine and Mesopotamia and which had Antioch as its metropolis, and not the prefecture of Oriens, which included the diocese of Egypt; the services of "Palestine and Mesopotamia and the entire Orient" are being distinguished from those of Egypt, as is explained in 3.1. Hence, to translate *Oriens* as "the East" (as Gibson does) could be misleading. Cf. Taft 80. For further use of the term in question, cf. 2.8 (?), 3.4.3, 3.9.1f., 4.19.1, 4.22; *Conlat.* 10.3.2 (?).

3.3 Most of the scriptural justifications given here for praying at terce, sext, and none are conventional and can be found scattered, among other places, in Tertullian, *De orat.* 25; idem, *De ieiun.* 10; Origen, *De orat.* 12.2; Cyprian, *De orat. dom.* 34; Basil, *Reg. fus. tract.* 37. Cassian's justifications for the morning and evening services are rarer. It is interesting that no specific scriptural texts are offered as a basis for the vigil and the other morning service that are spoken of elsewhere in the present book.

3.3.4 Four corners: *Quattuor initiis.* The common translation of *initium* is "beginning." On the imagery, cf. Jerome, *Ep.* 125.2, who, however, does not use *initia.* The "four beginnings" of the succeeding sentence are *quattuor...principia.*

3.3.5 Linen in fact indicates death: This is a strange view, although perhaps it is related to the common practice of clothing the dead in linen. Cf. Alfred C. Rush, *Death and Burial*

in Christian Antiquity = Studies in Christian Antiquity 1 (Washington, 1941), 128–130. For the more usual view that linen signifies immortality, cf. the note at 1.4.

3.3.6 On the nations as "salvific food" presented to Peter in this context, cf. Jerome, *Ep.* 125.2; Maximus of Turin, *Serm.* 2.2.

Cassian seems to be the first to associate the hour of none with Christ's descent into hell. The description of the Descent into Hell, here greatly abbreviated, is conventional. Cf. Ps.-Epiphanius, *Hom. in div. corp. sepulturam* (PG 43.456–457).

3.3.9 The citation from Ps 141 ("May my prayer be directed...") alludes to the use of this psalm at the evening office, or vespers. Indeed, it seems to have formed part of vespers since at least the first half of the third century. Cf. Origen, *De orat.* 12.2; Taft 16.

3.3.10ff. The "morning service" (*matutina sollemnitas*) that is spoken of here has often been identified with the hour of prime. Good arguments, however, are advanced in Taft 206–207 against this view. Taft prefers to call it "a sort of 'second matins'" that was peculiar to Cassian's own Bethlehem community at the end of the fourth century, and he declares emphatically that "the mere fact that Cassian is the earliest surviving witness to the material we have been studying [namely, the *matutina sollemnitas*] does not mean that the office he describes is the prototype of all later developments" (ibid. 209). The psalms that formed part of this office—"what we are accustomed to sing every day" (3.3.10)—are 50 (51), 62 (63), and 89 (90), which are mentioned explicitly in 3.6. In 3.3.10 only Ps 62 (63) is cited, followed by Ps 119.

3.3.11 The hour of the service of light: *Lucernaris hora.* For a discussion of the lucernarium, which was usually a part of the evening office, cf. Taft 36–37; DACL 9.2.2614–2616.

3.4.1 Cassian here refers to the fact that his first monastic experience was in Bethlehem. Cf. also 4.31; *Conlat.* 11.5, 17.5.2.

3.4.3 All the way here: Namely, as far as Gaul.

3.5.1 "Hymns" here and in 3.6 clearly has the meaning of "psalms." Cf. also 4.19.3.

The discharge of "an excess of natural moisture" is a nocturnal emission. Keeping such eventualities to a minimum was highly desirable and is the burden of much of *Conlat.* 12 and 22.

Pure and simple sleep: *Puri ac simplicis somni.* "Simple" is often used in a sexual context in Cassian, but then almost always in terms of nocturnal emissions that are not consciously provoked. Cf. the note at *Conlat.* 22.3.5. Here, however, it refers to a sleep during which no emission occurs at all.

3.5.2 The celebration of the canonical office: *Missa canonica celebrata.* Regarding *missa,* cf. also 3.6 ("office"), 3.7.1, 3.8.2 ("dismissal"), 3.11 ("office") and the note at 2.7.1.

3.6 Our elders...changed nothing with respect to the ancient custom of the psalmody: That is to say, the addition of the new morning service (for which cf. the note at 3.3.10ff.), comprised of Pss 50 (51), 62 (63), and 89 (90), did not imply any changes in the composition of the other offices.

Pss 148–150 have been associated with the morning office, or lauds, since at least the late fourth century. Cf. Taft 80–81 and the index entry ibid. 395.

3.7 There is legislation similar to this in Pachomius, *Reg.* 9.

3.8.1 The evening when Saturday begins: *A vespere inlucescente sabbato:* I.e., on Friday evening.

3.8.4 On the use of "antiphons" here, cf. the note at 2.2.1.

3.9.1 The start of Saturday: *Inlucescente sabbato:* I.e., Friday evening. Friday: *Sexta sabbati.*

The origin of the idea that the apostles kept vigil from Good Friday to Holy Saturday is unknown. Scripture only refers to a gathering of the apostles on the evening of the Resurrection. Cf. Jn 20:19.

3.9.2ff. This passage suggests something of the special status enjoyed by Saturday in early Christianity. Jerome, *Comm. in Eccl.* 11:2, identifies the seventh part with Saturday and the eighth with Sunday, but he does not develop the symbolism as Cassian does.

3.10 The Saturday fast at Rome (here referred to as *urbs,* "the City") is mentioned for the first time at the beginning of the third century in Tertullian, *De ieiunio* 14. The custom is discussed at length in Augustine, *Ep.* 36, and alluded to again in *Ep.* 54.2.3. The reason given by Cassian—namely, that Peter was preparing for his struggle with Simon Magus on a Sunday, all of which is recounted in the second-century *Actus Petri* 31f. —is said by Augustine in *Ep.* 36.9.21 to have been rejected by most Romans.

The remark that Peter might even have decreed a fast on Sunday itself, but that this would not have established a canonical rule, is an example both of Cassian's profound respect for tradition and of his willingness to make reasonable exceptions. Against Sunday fasting cf. 2.18 and the relevant note.

3.11 Assembly: *Collectae.*

3.12 On the psalmody here cf. Taft 79.

FOURTH BOOK: THE INSTITUTES OF THE RENUNCIANTS

Chapters

I. The instruction of those who renounce this world, and how those who are received into monasteries by the Tabennisiots and Egyptians are trained.

II. How it is that among them they persevere in cenobia up to extreme old age.

III. How someone who is to be received into a cenobium is tested.

IV. Why those who are taken into a monastery are permitted to bring nothing with them.

V. Why renunciants who have been received into monasteries put aside their own garb and are clothed in another by the abba.

VI. For what reason the garb in which the renunciants entered the monastery is kept by a steward.

VII. Why those who have been received into a monastery are not permitted to mingle with the brothers at once but are first put in the guest house.

VIII. With what institutes the juniors are first engaged, so that they might succeed in overcoming all their desires.

IX. Why the juniors are commanded to conceal none of their thoughts from their elder.

X. What great obedience is owed to the elders even in necessities of nature.

XI. What sort of food they consider most delicious.

XII. That at the sound of someone knocking at the door they spare no effort to answer it quickly.

XIII. That it is considered a great crime if someone calls something his own, however insignificant.

XIV. That, although a great deal of money may be accumulated by someone's labor, nonetheless no one may presume to exceed the small amount that has been decided on as sufficient.

XV. The immoderate eagerness for possession that exists in us.

XVI. The rules for different kinds of correction.

XVII. Whence comes the practice that, in the cenobia, sacred texts are read to the brothers as they eat, and what great silence obtains among the Egyptians.

XVIII. How illicit it is to taste any food or drink apart from the common table.

XIX. How in Palestine and Mesopotamia daily tasks are undertaken by the brothers.

XX. The three lentils found by the bursar.

XXI. The unsolicited service of some brothers.

XXII. The arrangements that the Egyptians have established for the daily tasks of the brothers.

XXIII. The obedience of Abba John, whereby he was advanced as far as the grace of prophecy.

XXIV. The dry stick, which the same Abba John did not cease to water, as if it would grow, in accordance with the command of his elder.

XXV. The jar of oil, the only one of its kind, that Abba John threw away at the command of his elder.

XXVI. How Abba John obeyed his elder by rolling a rock that could not be moved even by many men.

XXVII. The humility and obedience of Abba Patermutius, which he did not hesitate to perfect by throwing his little son into a river at the order of an elder.

XXVIII. How it was revealed to the abba concerning Patermutius that he had done the deed of Abraham, and that when that abba was dead the same Patermutius succeeded him in the administration of the monastery.

XXIX. The obedience of the brother who, at the abba's command, carried around ten baskets and sold them at retail.

XXX. The humility of Abba Pinufius, who left a very famous cenobium, over which he presided as the priest, and in his search for perfection went off to a faraway monastery, in which he was received as a beginner.

XXXI. How Abba Pinufius was brought back to his own monastery, stayed there a short while, and fled again to the regions of Palestinian Syria.

XXXII. The precepts that the same Abba Pinufius gave to a brother, whom he took into his monastery, while we were present.

XXXIII. That just as, according to the teaching of the fathers, a great recompense is owed the brother who toils, so also in similar fashion must punishment be meted out to the lazy, and that therefore a person should not be too easily admitted to a monastery.

XXXIV. That renunciation is nothing else than a dying and an image of the Crucified.

XXXV. That the fear of the Lord is our cross.

XXXVI. That renunciation is of no value if we get entangled in the same things that we have renounced.

XXXVII. That the devil always lies in wait for our end and that we must constantly be on the watch for his head.

XXXVIII. The preparation of the renunciant in the face of trial, and the few who should be imitated.

XXXIX. The stages whereby one may arrive at perfection, by

which subsequently one may mount from the fear to the love of God.

XL. That a monk should not seek examples of perfection from many but from one or a few.

XLI. That one who lives in a cenobium must take on the likeness of certain weaknesses.

XLII. That a monk should not expect the good of patience to come from others' virtuousness but rather from his own forbearance.

XLIII. A recapitulation of the explanation of how the monk may mount to perfection.

I. Following the order of our exposition, we pass on from the canonical method of prayer and psalmody that must be observed in the daytime gatherings in all monasteries to the instruction of him who renounces this world. In the first place we shall attempt, as briefly as we can, to deal with the conditions under which those who desire to turn to God are received into cenobia, joining together some aspects of the rules of the Egyptians and some of those of the Tabennisiots. Their cenobium in the Thebaid is more populous than all the others inasmuch as it is stricter in its rigorous way of life, for in it more than five thousand brothers are ruled by a single abba, and this huge number of monks is subject at every moment to their elder with an obedience such as, among us, one could neither render to another nor demand of another even for a short while.

II. Before anything else I think that we ought to touch upon how the great perseverance and humility and subjection of these men is so enduring and by what training it is shaped, such that they persevere in the cenobium until they are bent with age. (For it is of a kind that we do not recall anyone who has joined our monasteries to have maintained even for a full year.) Then, when we have seen the initial stages of their renunciation, we shall

understand how, as a consequence, the foundations of these beginnings rose to such lofty heights of perfection.

III. 1. So, then, whoever seeks to be received into the discipline of the cenobium is never admitted until, by lying outside for ten days or more, he has given an indication of his perseverance and desire, as well as of his humility and patience. And when he has embraced the knees of all the brothers passing by and has been purposely rebuked and disdained by everyone, as if he wished to enter the monastery not out of devotion but out of necessity, and has been visited with numerous insults and reproaches and has given proof of his constancy, and by putting up with taunts has shown what he will be like in time of trial, and when the ardor of his intention has been proven and he has thus been received, he is asked with the utmost earnestness if, from his former possessions, the contamination of even a single copper coin clings to him. 2. For they know that he could not remain subject to the discipline of the monastery for any length of time, nor indeed grasp hold of the virtue of humility and obedience or be content with the poverty and strictness of the cenobium, if some amount of money, however small, lay hidden on his conscience; rather, when the first disturbance arose for any reason whatsoever, he would be encouraged by the security of that sum and would flee the monastery as fast as a whirring slingstone.

IV. Therefore they do not even agree to accept money from him that would be for the needs of the cenobium. The reason for this is that, first, he might be puffed up with self-confidence from having made this offering and would never deign to be on a par with his poorer brothers; and that then, as a result of this pride, he would never stoop to the lowliness of Christ, and when he was unable to remain under the discipline of the cenobium he would leave and would with sacrilegious spirit endeavor, now having grown lukewarm, to take back and claim what he had brought in at the beginning of his renunciation, when he was inflamed with spiritual

fervor, and this would be injurious to the monastery. They have often been taught by numerous experiences that this observance must always be maintained. For in other less cautious monasteries some who were admitted without any ado have afterwards most blasphemously attempted to demand the return of what they had brought in and had been spent on the work of God.

V. Hence, when someone has been received, all his former possessions are removed from him, such that he is not even permitted to have the clothing that he wore. He is brought to the council of the brothers, stripped of what is his in their midst, and clothed in the garb of the monastery at the hands of the abba. Thus he may know not only that he has been despoiled of all his former things but also that he has put off all worldly pride and has stooped to the poverty and want of Christ, and that now he is to be supported not by wealth obtained in worldly fashion or stored up by his former lack of faith[1] but that he will receive the pay for his soldiering from the holy and gracious supplies of the monastery. Thenceforth, knowing that he will be clothed and fed from there, he will learn both to possess nothing and never to be worried about the morrow, according to the words of the Gospel,[2] and he will not be ashamed to be on a par with the poor—that is, with the body of the brotherhood—among whom Christ was not ashamed to be numbered and whose brother he did not blush to call himself; rather he will glory in having become the companion of his servants.

VI. The clothing that he has taken off is deposited with the bursar and kept until, thanks to various trials and tests, he has made progress and they clearly recognize the virtue of his way of life and of his endurance. And when they see, as time goes on, that he can stay in that place and maintain the same fervor with which he began, they give it to the poor. But if they notice that he has committed the sin of complaining or is guilty of an act of disobedience, however slight, they strip him of the garb of the

monastery with which he had been clothed and, dressed once more in what he used to wear, which had been laid aside, they drive him out. For no one is allowed to depart with what he received, nor do they permit anyone to continue to dress as such when they see that he has even once veered away from the rule of his training. Hence also the possibility of leaving openly is never granted to anyone, unless either he escapes by night like a runaway slave on the watch for the thickest darkness or, having been judged unworthy of his state and profession, the garb of the monastery is removed from him and he is driven out with shame and notoriety in the presence of all the brothers.

VII. When, therefore, a person has been admitted, has been proven in the perseverance about which we have spoken, and has put aside his own garments and been clothed in the monastic habit, he is not permitted to join the community of the brothers immediately but is assigned to an elder who dwells not very far from the entrance of the monastery, who is responsible for travelers and strangers and is particularly devoted to welcoming them and to being hospitable to them. And when he has served for a full year there and has without any complaining waited upon travelers, having in this way been exposed to his first training in humility and patience and having been recognized for his long practice therein, and he is about to be admitted from this to the community of the brothers, he is given over to another elder who is responsible for ten younger men, who have been entrusted to him by the abba and whom he both teaches and rules, in accordance with what we read in Exodus was established by Moses.3

VIII. The chief concern and instruction of this man, whereby the young man who was brought to him may be able to ascend even to the loftiest heights of perfection, will be, first of all, to teach him to conquer his desires. In order to exercise him assiduously and diligently in this respect, he will purposely see to it that he always demands of him things that he would consider repulsive. For,

taught by numerous experiences, they declare that a monk, and especially the younger men, cannot restrain their yearning for pleasure unless they have first learned to mortify their desires through obedience. And so they assert that someone who has not first learned to overcome his desires can never extinguish anger or sadness or the spirit of fornication, nor can he maintain true humility of heart or unbroken unity with his brothers or a solid and enduring peace, nor can he even stay in the cenobium for any length of time.

IX. With these institutes, then, as with the rudiments of the alphabet, they initiate those whom they strive to expose to and to direct toward perfection. In this way they discern clearly whether they are grounded in a humility that is deceptive and imaginary or in one that is real. In order to be able to arrive easily at this, they are then taught never, through a hurtful shame, to hide any of the wanton thoughts in their hearts but to reveal them to their elder as soon as they surface, nor to judge them in accordance with their own discretion but to credit them with badness or goodness as the elder's examination discloses and makes clear. And so it never happens that the clever foe is able to get the better of a young man as if he were inexperienced and ignorant, or to deceive him by some trick, when he sees that he is protected not by his own but by his elder's discretion and that he cannot be persuaded to hide from his elder whatever promptings and fiery darts he casts into his heart. Indeed, the devil in all his slyness will not be able to deceive or cast down a young man unless he inveigles him, either by haughtiness or by embarrassment, into covering up his thoughts. For they declare that it is an invariable and clear sign that a thought is from the devil if we are ashamed to disclose it to an elder.

X. Along with this such a great observance is maintained, thanks to the rule of obedience, that the young men do not even presume to attend to their common and natural necessities on their own

authority, to say nothing of daring to leave their cells, without the knowledge and permission of their superior. They so strive to accomplish everything that has been ordered by him, without discussion and as if it were ordained from heaven by God, that they sometimes take on themselves even impossible commands with such faith and devotion that they strain with all their energy and without any inner hesitation to fulfill them and see them through and, out of reverence for their elder, do not fear even the impossibility of an order. I refrain now from speaking of individual instances of their obedience, for we plan to treat of this, using examples, a little later in its proper place, if by our prayers the Lord gives us leave. Let us take up other institutes at present, omitting (as we promised we would do in our brief preface) those that cannot be passed on to the monasteries in this region or be observed by them—for instance, that they do not use woolen clothing but only linen, which is not even doubled, and which each superior provides changes of for his group of ten, when he notices that those they are wearing have gotten dirty.

XI. We shall likewise leave out that difficult and lofty kind of abstinence wherein it is considered especially delicious if salted greens, which they call *labsanion,* are mixed with water and given to the brothers to eat, as well as many other things of that sort. In this region neither the climate nor our weak disposition makes them possible. I shall pursue only those things that no infirmity of flesh or character of locale can impede, so long as frailty of soul and tepidity of mind do not stand in the way.

XII. When they are seated in their rooms and devoting their energies to both work and meditation and they hear the sound of someone knocking at the door and striking at the cells of different ones, calling them to prayer or to some kind of work, they immediately rush out of their rooms. Thus the person who is busy writing does not dare to complete the letter that he has begun, but at the very moment when the sound of the knocking reaches his

ears he jumps up with the utmost haste, not even dotting an *i* but abandoning the unfinished lines of the letter. He is not thinking in terms of abbreviating and saving his efforts so much as he is striving with all his energy and zeal to pursue the virtue of obedience. It is this that they prefer not only to manual labor or to reading or to the peace and quiet of their cells but even to all other virtues, such that they judge everything else as negligible in comparison with it and are content to undergo any loss whatsoever as long as they do not violate this good in any respect.

XIII. I consider it superfluous even to mention, among their other teachings, this virtue—namely, that no one is permitted to possess a chest or a basket of his own or anything of that sort, and to keep as his own what would have to be labeled as his. There are some who we know are so poor in every respect that they have nothing more than a colobium, a *mafors,* sandals, a *melotis,* and a mat. In other monasteries, although some concessions have been made in rather indulgent fashion, we see this rule observed most strictly to this very day—that not even orally may anyone dare to call something his own, and that it is a great crime for a monk to say with his own mouth "my book," "my writing tablets," "my pen," "my tunic," or "my sandals." If ever an expression of this sort slips out, through inadvertence or ignorance, he is to make appropriate reparation for it.

XIV. And although each of them may bring in considerable revenue to the monastery every day, thanks to his own labor and effort, so that from it he is not only able to sustain his own few needs but can even supply abundantly the requirements of many persons, yet in no way is he puffed up, nor does he flatter himself by reason of his labor's considerable recompense or its effort. On the contrary, no one claims anything for himself beyond the two loaves that are sold in the neighborhood for no more than three denarii. Among them no private work (which it is shameful to speak of and which I wish that we were unaware of in our own

monasteries) is ever taken up by anyone even in thought, to say nothing of deed. He may well believe that all the cenobium's belongings are his own property and, as master of them all, expend the whole of his concern and solicitude on all of them. Nonetheless, in order to keep hold of the virtue of poverty that he has seized upon and that he strives to maintain perfectly and inviolably until the end, he considers himself so removed from them all and so detached from everything that he comports himself like a sojourner and a stranger in this world, and he views himself as a ward of the monastery and its servant rather than presuming to act as master of anything.

XV. 1. What can we wretches say to this? Although we live in cenobia, cared for and provided for by an abba, we go around with our own keys and, utterly oblivious of shaming and disgracing our profession, are not even embarrassed to wear rings openly on our fingers with which we can seal items that have been stored away. In this respect not even chests or baskets, nor indeed coffers or closets, are enough to safeguard what we have collected and held onto since we left the world. We sometimes get so inflamed over the littlest and most insignificant things, when we claim them as our own, that, if someone dares so much as to touch one of them with his finger, we are filled with such anger against him as to be unable to keep our inner outrage from oral expression and even from bodily reaction.

2. But we pass over these faults of ours and also over those that are not even appropriate to mention, relegating them to silence in keeping with the words "Let my mouth not speak of the deeds of men"[4] but rather of the virtues that are theirs and of those things that we too should seek after with all our strength. Now that our narrative has begun, let us pursue those things, quickly and briefly setting down the rules and ways of doing things themselves so that, once we have moved beyond them to certain deeds and acts of the elders that we have arranged to be carefully committed to

memory, we may confirm with the most irrefutable testimonies, as it were, what is set forth in our exposition, backing up everything that we have spoken of by their example and by the authority of their lives.

XVI. 1. If, then, anyone has for whatever reason broken an earthenware vessel, which they call a *baucalis,* he cannot make up for his negligence except by public repentance, and when all the brothers have come together for the synaxis he shall beg for pardon, prostrate on the earth, until the service of prayers is concluded, and he shall obtain it when, at the judgment of the abba, he is ordered to get up from the ground. A person is to make reparation in the same way if, having been summoned to some task or to a scheduled meeting, he arrives a bit late; or if, when singing a psalm, he wavers even slightly; 2. likewise, if he responds to something unnecessarily, or harshly, or insolently; if he fulfills his appointed tasks negligently; if he complains even slightly; if he has carried out his fixed responsibilities sluggishly and prefers reading to work and to obedience; if, when the synaxis is dismissed, he does not bestir himself to return quickly to his cell; if he tarries for even a short while with someone or if he sits down somewhere for a moment; if he holds another's hand; if he dares to converse even briefly with someone who does not share his cell; if he prays with someone who has been suspended from prayer; if he sees one of his relatives or one of his friends from the world and speaks to him without his elder; if he tries to receive someone's letter or to reply to one without his abba. To this extent and for these and similar faults does spiritual chastisement take place. 3. But other faults, which we commit indiscriminately and which we also view as quite reprehensible, are corrected not by that spiritual punishment we have described but by blows, or they are purged by expulsion. These include loud altercations, open contempt, blatant contradictions, free and reckless departure, familiarity with women, anger, quarrels, dissension and disputes, daring to have one's own work, being contaminated by avarice, the desire for and the pos-

session of superfluities that other brothers do not have, excessive and clandestine eating, and things like these.

XVII. We know, however, that the reading of sacred texts in the cenobia while the brothers are eating follows the model of the Cappadocians rather than that of the Egyptians. There is no doubt that they wished to establish this not so much for the sake of spiritual discipline as in order to curb superfluous and vain chattering and especially arguments, which often arise during meals, seeing that they could not contain them among themselves otherwise. For among the Egyptians, and in particular among the Tabennisiots, all are so silent that, even though a large number of brothers is seated together for the purpose of eating, no one dares even to whisper apart from the one who is in charge of his own group of ten, who nonetheless indicates by a sound rather than by a word if he notices that something must either be brought to or removed from the table. And so great is the discipline of silence that is observed while they are eating that, with their hoods drawn lower than their eyebrows lest a free view facilitate a roving curiosity, they can see nothing more than the table and the food that is put on it or taken off of it. The result of this is that no one notices how or how much another person is eating.

XVIII. Both before and after the lawful common meal the greatest precaution is taken lest anyone ever dare, apart from mealtime, to indulge his taste for food. For when they go through the gardens and orchards and the fruit everywhere hangs beckoningly from the trees and not only brushes against the breasts of passers-by but is also underfoot and strewn about on the ground, it can easily entice those who see it to pick it up in accordance with their desire, and thanks to its availability and its abundance it can cause even the strict and the most abstemious to yearn for it. But it is considered a sacrilege not just to taste of but even to extend one's hand to anything that is not outrightly offered to everyone eating in common and that is not publicly

served at the bursar's say-so for the brothers to take and enjoy.

XIX. 1. Lest we seem to omit any of the institutes of the cenobia, I think that I should briefly discuss how daily tasks are performed by the brothers in other regions as well. For throughout the whole of Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Cappadocia, and all over the Orient, the brothers take each other's place by turns each week in the performance of these duties, in such a way that the number of servers is reckoned according to the population of the cenobium. They hasten to accomplish these with a devotion and humility greater than the servitude that any slave would show to a very harsh and powerful master. Thus, in fact, they are not content with only the tasks that fulfill the canonical law but even get up at night to relieve others out of their own zeal and to anticipate their responsibilities, and, showing up on the sly, they strive to take care of the things that are supposed to be carried out by those others.

2. Each person who undertakes these weeks is engaged in this service until Sunday supper. Once that is over, the whole week's service is concluded as follows. When the brothers gather as a group to sing the psalms they usually chant before going to their rest, those whose places are to be taken wash everyone's feet in order, thereby confidently seeking from them the reward of a blessing for their whole week's labor—namely, that the prayer that is uttered by all the brothers together may accompany them as they fulfill the mandate of Christ.5 It is this that intercedes for acts of ignorance and sins committed from human frailty and that which commends to God, as if they were "a rich sacrifice,"6 their now completed duties of devotion. 3. And so on Monday, after the morning hymns, they hand over to the others who are taking their places the utensils and vessels with which they have served. Those receiving them take such good care of them, lest any of them be damaged or get lost, that they treat the least significant vessels as if they were sacrosanct and hold themselves responsible not only

to the steward of the time but to the Lord himself if perchance any of them comes to harm through their negligence. You will be able to see what sort of discipline is at issue here and how faithfully and carefully it is observed by way of one testimony, which I shall use as an example. For just as we are anxious to satisfy that fervor of yours which, as a result of your desire for complete knowledge of all these things, seeks the reiteration in this little book of what you already know very well, so likewise we fear to exceed the measure of brevity.

XX. During the week of a certain brother, as the bursar was going about he noticed three lentils lying on the ground. They had slipped out of the hands of the weekly server, along with the water in which they were soaking, as he was hastening to prepare them for cooking. He at once consulted the abba on this matter, and he judged him a pilferer and a waster of sacred goods and suspended him from prayer. This crime of negligence was not forgiven him until he had absolved it by an act of public repentance. For they believe that not only they themselves are not their own but that everything that is theirs has been consecrated to the Lord. Hence whatever has once been brought into the monastery must, in their judgment, be treated with all respect as sacrosanct. With such great faith do they care for and dispose of everything, even things that are looked down upon and considered paltry and unimportant, that they have complete confidence that they will obtain a reward from the Lord if they move something or arrange it more advantageously, if they fill a vessel with water or offer it to someone for a drink, or if they remove a bit of straw from the oratory or their cells.

XXI. We know of brothers during whose week there was such a scarcity of wood that there was no way at all for them to prepare the customary meal for the brothers. Until some could be purchased and brought in, it was commanded, by the abba's authority, that they should make do with dry food. This was

acceptable to everyone, and no one expected any cooked food. But those men, feeling defrauded of the fruit and reward of their labor and responsibility if they could not prepare food for their brothers according to custom when it was their turn, imposed upon themselves a consuming voluntary effort: In those dry and barren places in which no wood whatsoever can be found unless it is cut from fruit trees (for there are no shrub groves such as we have), they ran about all through the wilderness and traversed the desert, which stretches toward the Dead Sea, collecting in the folds of their garments and in their bosoms bits of straw and thorns that the wind had scattered here and there. Thus by their own doing they were able to prepare all the accustomed food, and they allowed nothing to be missing from the usual provisions. With such great faith did they offer these services of theirs to their brothers that, even though the scarcity of wood and the abba's command could have been a genuine excuse for them, they were unwilling, because of the fruit and the reward attached to them, to take advantage of that liberty.

XXII. As we remarked previously, this is in keeping with the way of doing things throughout the Orient, which we say must also be observed in our region. But among the Egyptians, who are very concerned about their work, there is no weekly taking of turns, lest as a result of this activity anyone be hindered from obligatory work. Instead, the responsibility for provisions and for cooking is committed to a very trustworthy brother, who continues to carry out this task with regularity so long as his strength and his age permit. For he is not worn out with any great bodily labor inasmuch as they do not devote much care to preparing and cooking their food, since they mostly make use of dry and uncooked food, and the leaves of leeks that are cut every month, charlock, granulated salt, olives, and tiny salted fish, which they call maenomenia, are their highest pleasure.

XXIII. Because this book is for the instruction of him who

renounces this world, whereby he may be led to true humility and perfect obedience and be able to mount the heights of the other virtues as well, I consider it necessary, as we have promised, to set out by way of example some of the deeds of the elders in which they shone forth in virtue. From the many we shall cull a very few. Thus, for those who are eager to pursue things still more sublime, there might arise from these not only an incitement to a perfect life but also an outline of their chosen orientation.

Hence out of the innumerable multitude of the fathers we mention two or three, in order to keep this book short, and the first to be presented is Abba John. He lived near Lycon, which is a town in the Thebaid, and on account of the virtue of obedience he was raised to the grace of prophecy itself and was so famous everywhere that, by reason of his remarkable qualities, he was sought after even by the kings of this world. For although he stayed in the most distant regions of the Thebaid, as we have said, the Emperor Theodosius did not presume to do battle against mighty tyrants until he had been encouraged by his oracles and words; trusting in them as if they were heavensent, he seized victory from his enemies in desperate battles.

XXIV. 1. From his youth on up to full and mature manhood, for as long as held to this way of life, this blessed John submitted to his elder, and with such humility did he cling to his service that his obedience struck the old man himself with utter amazement. Wanting to find out more clearly whether this virtue of his came from a true faith and a profound simplicity of heart or whether it was an affectation and somehow forced and intended to impress his superior, he would frequently impose on him many things that were even superfluous, unnecessary, and impossible. 2. Of these I shall give three, so that the perfection of his intention and of his submission may be apparent to those who are interested in knowing.

The old man once took from his woodpile a branch that had

been cut and was to be used in the brazier and that, since no cooking was being done at the time, was not merely dry but nearly rotten with age. Having stuck this in the ground in front of him, he ordered him to fetch water and water it twice a day, so that it would take root with its daily waterings, come alive again as a tree, spread out its branches, and offer a pleasant sight to the eyes and shade in the extreme heat to those sitting under it. 3. Receiving this command with his customary deference and without any thought of its impossibility, the young man carried it out every day. He fetched water unremittingly from nearly two miles away and never ceased watering the stick. Throughout the course of the year no bodily infirmity, no festal service, no necessary occupation of any kind that would legitimately have excused him from executing this order, nor even the onset of the harshness of winter, could keep him from fulfilling this command. 4. And when the old man had silently and hiddenly observed this diligence of his day after day and saw him keep his injunction, as if it had been divinely issued, with a simple disposition of heart and without any change of expression or questioning of his reasons, he was certain that his obedience was sincere and humble, and he also pitied him for his drawn-out labor, to which he had zealously devoted himself for the course of a whole year. Going up to the dry branch he said: "O John, has this tree established roots or not?" And when he said that he did not know, the old man, as if investigating the situation and trying to see whether it had already sprouted roots, with a slight movement pulled up the branch in his presence and cast it aside, ordering him to cease watering it from then on.

XXV. And so the youth, trained every day in exercises of this kind, matured in the virtue of obedience and shone with the grace of humility, and the sweet odor of his obedience spread through all the monasteries. When some of the brothers came to the old man with a view to proving this, but more particularly to being edified, after having heard of and having marveled at his submission, the old man at once summoned him. "Go up," he said, "with the vessel

of oil" (which was the only one in the desert and in which he used to keep a very little of this rich liquid for his own needs and those of his visitors) "and throw it out the window." Aroused, he hastened upstairs, cast it out the window, and threw it down to the ground to break, giving little thought or reflection to the absurdity of the command, daily need, bodily weakness, the scarcity of provisions, and the limits and lacks of the harsh desert, in which, even if money were available, an item that was lost or damaged could never be either found or repaired.

XXVI. Again, when others wished to be edified by the example of his obedience, the elder called him and said: "Run, John, and roll that rock here as quickly as you can." Immediately he strove with great effort and exertion to roll the huge rock, which many crowds of men could not budge, pushing against it sometimes with his shoulders and sometimes with his whole body. The result was that he not only drenched all his clothing with sweat from his entire body but even wet the stone itself with his shoulders. In this case as well he little weighed the impossibility of the command or of the deed in his reverence for the old man and in his sincere and simple dutifulness, which led him to believe with absolute confidence that the old man could give no order that was purposeless and unreasonable.

XXVII. 1. Let it suffice thus far to have said these few things from the many concerning Abba John. Now I shall relate a deed of Abba Patermutus that is worthy of remembrance. He, desiring to renounce this world, persisted in keeping watch outside the monastery until, thanks to his unwavering perseverance and against every custom of the cenobia, he was called and received along with his young son, who was about eight years old. And when at last they were taken in, they were at once not only handed over to different superiors but even made to live in separate cells, lest the father think, from constantly seeing the lad, that, of all the goods and carnal feelings of his that he had renounced and cast

aside, at least his son was still his. Thus, just as he knew that he was no longer a rich man, so he might also know that he was not a father.

2. In order to find out more clearly whether he [the father] made more of his feeling for his kindred and of his own heart's love or of obedience and mortification in Christ (which every renunciant ought to prefer out of love for him), the little boy was purposely neglected, clothed in rags rather than garments, and so covered over and marred with filth as to shock rather than delight his father whenever he would see him. He was also exposed to the blows and slaps of different persons, which he often with his own eyes saw inflicted even arbitrarily on the innocent youngster, such that whenever he saw his cheeks they were streaked with the dirty traces of tears. 3. And although the child was treated this way under his eyes day after day, the father's heart nonetheless remained ever stern and unmoved out of love for Christ and by the virtue of obedience. For he no longer considered as his son the child whom he had offered to Christ along with himself, nor did he worry about his present sufferings; instead he rejoiced because he saw that they were not being borne fruitlessly, and, concerned about his own humility and perfection, he gave little thought to his tears. The elder of the cenobium, on noticing the steadfastness of his mind and his unmoving sternness, and with a view to testing his strength of mind to the utmost, made believe that he was upset with the child when one day he saw him crying, and he ordered his father to take him and throw him into the river. 4. Thereupon, as if he had been ordered to do so by the Lord, he immediately ran, took his son in his own arms and brought him to the edge of the river, intending to hurl him in. Given the fervor of his faith and obedience this would certainly have been brought to a bitter end were there not brothers purposely stationed by the bank of the river, carefully watching, who somehow snatched the child from the current when he had been thrown in and prevented the command, which had been fulfilled by the obedient devotion of the

father, from being carried out with all its consequences.

XXVIII. The man's faith and devotion were so acceptable to God that they were immediately confirmed by divine testimony. For it was straightaway revealed to the elder that by this obedience he had performed the deed of the patriarch Abraham.7 And when after a short space of time the same abba of the cenobium was departing this world for Christ, he preferred him to all the brothers and left him to the monastery as his successor and as abba.

XXIX. We shall not be silent concerning a brother who is known to us and who, in this world's ranking, is from a very esteemed family. For he was born of a very wealthy father, a comes, and had a good education in liberal studies. Having left his parents and fled to the monastery, he was at once ordered by an elder, so as to test the humility of his mind and the ardor of his faith, to load his shoulders with ten baskets (which did not need to be sold publicly) and carry them around and offer them for sale in the streets. To this a condition was added whereby he would be kept longer at his task—namely that, if perchance someone wished to purchase all of them, he was not to let them go but was only to sell them individually to buyers. This he accomplished with utter devotion. Trampling down all shame and embarrassment for the sake of Christ's name and out of desire for him, he put the baskets on his shoulders, sold them for the agreed-upon price, and brought the money back to the monastery. He was not at all shaken by the strangeness of such a mean and unheard-of task, and he paid no heed to its indignity, to the fame of his lineage, or to the inequity of his being a vendor, for through the grace of obedience he wished to acquire the humility of Christ, which is true nobility.

XXX. 1. The plan of this book obliges us to draw to a close, but the good of obedience, which holds the first place among the other virtues, does not allow us to pass over in complete silence the deeds of those who shone forth by reason of it. Therefore,

mingling two things in due proportion by yielding to brevity as well as to the desires and needs of the eager, we shall offer one further example of humility that, coming not from a beginner but from one who was perfect and an abba, will be capable not only of instructing the younger men but even of inciting the elders to the perfect virtue of humility, once they read it.

2. We saw, then, Abba Pinufius, who was the priest of an immense cenobium that is in Egypt, not far from the city of Panephysis, and he was honored and venerated by all out of reverence for his life, his age, and his priesthood. But he saw that, on this very account, he was unable to exercise that humility which he yearned for in the ardor of his mind and that he did not have the means to lay hold of the virtue of submission he desired, and secretly he fled the cenobium and withdrew by himself to the furthermost reaches of the Thebaid. There, having laid aside his monk's garb and having put on worldly attire, he sought out the cenobium of the Tabennisiots, which he knew was stricter than all the others, believing that in it he would go unrecognized because of the remoteness of the region and that he could hide himself easily because of the vastness of the monastery and the multitude of the brothers. 3. There he stayed at the entrance for quite a long while, embracing the knees of all the brothers and begging with most urgent pleas to be admitted. And when at last he was received with much contempt, because he was asking to enter the cenobium as a worn-out old man who had lived out all his years and was no longer able now to cater to his own pleasures, and they asserted that he sought this not for the sake of religion but because he was compelled by hunger and want, the care and maintenance of the garden was enjoined upon him, since he was an old man and utterly unsuited for any work. 4. This he carried out under another and younger brother, who kept him as one who was entrusted to him, and he so submitted to him and cultivated with such obedience the virtue of humility that he desired that every day, with great diligence, he accomplished not only whatever

pertained to the maintenance of the garden but also all the tasks that were difficult and demeaning for the others and that disgusted everyone. He would even get up at night and do many things secretly under cover of darkness, with no witnesses and no accomplices, so that no one ever discovered the author of the deeds. When he had hidden there for three years and was being sought throughout Egypt by brothers who had been scattered in all directions, he was finally seen by someone who was passing through that part of Egypt. He was hardly recognizable because of his humble clothing and the mean job that he was performing, 5. for he was bent over and cultivating the ground around the vegetables with a hoe and then carrying dung on his shoulders and putting it by their roots. When the brother noticed this and was hesitating for a while as to who he was, he at length drew closer and gave careful consideration not only to his face but also to the sound of his voice, and all at once he fell at his feet. At first it struck all the onlookers with the greatest amazement that he did this to someone whom they viewed as the very least of them—a novice who had only lately come from the world. But they were still more amazed when, thereupon, he mentioned his name, which was well known and enjoyed great authority among them. 6. All the brothers begged pardon from him for their previous ignorance, because they had counted him for such a long time among the young men and the children, and they brought him back to his own cenobium, guarding him with the greatest care lest he escape from them and flee somewhere else. Meanwhile he wept with frustration because by the devil's envy he had been defrauded of a way of life and of a humility that were appropriate for him and that he had sought for a very long time and had finally found somewhere, and because he had not deserved to end his life in the submission that he had taken up.

XXXI. When he had stayed there a short while he was again inflamed with the same ardent desire for humility. Seizing upon the silence of the night he fled, seeking now not a neighboring

province but regions unknown, foreign and distant. For, taking ship, he arranged to go to Palestine in the belief that he would conceal himself better if he went off to places where his name had never even been heard of. When he arrived there he immediately looked for our monastery, which was not far from the cave in which our Lord deigned to be born of a virgin. There he hid for a very short time, but, in keeping with the Lord's words, like "a city set on a hill"[8] he could not stay concealed for long. For some of the brothers who had come from Egypt to the holy places in order to pray recognized him at once and, by the strongest beseechings, brought him back to his own cenobium.

XXXII. This, then, was the old man whom we most eagerly sought out afterwards in Egypt by reason of the confidence that we had in him in our own monastery. It was he who gave the exhortation to a brother whom he received into his cenobium in our presence and that it is my intention to introduce into this little work, because I think that some instruction can be gained from it.

"You know," he said, "how many days you kept watch outside and that today you have been accepted. The first thing that you should be aware of is the reason for the difficulty that was involved, for it will be of great use to you in the way that you desire to enter upon if, once having recognized the reason in question, you approach Christ's service suitably and appropriately.

XXXIII. "For just as immeasurable glory is promised in the world to come to those who faithfully serve God and cling to him in accordance with the teaching of this rule, so also the harshest punishments are prepared for those who follow it lukewarmly and negligently and fail to produce for him fitting fruits of holiness, in keeping with what they have professed and how they are viewed by other people. For, according to the words of Scripture, 'it is better' for someone 'not to vow than to vow and not to pay.'[9] And: 'Cursed is the one who does the works of the Lord negligently.'[10] You were put off by us for a very long while, then, not because we

do not utterly desire and wish to foster your salvation and that of everyone, or because we have no inclination whatsoever to meet those who wish to turn to Christ, but so that we may not receive them heedlessly and, before God, make ourselves guilty of light-mindedness and you of a harsher punishment if, having been accepted easily now without appreciating the gravity of this profession, you were afterwards to show yourself lukewarm and a backslider. Hence you must first understand the reason for your renunciation, and when you have examined it you may learn more clearly from its explanation how you should act.

XXXIV. "Renunciation is nothing else than a manifestation of the cross and of a dying. Therefore you should know that on this day you have died to the world and to its deeds and desires and that, according to the Apostle, you have been crucified to this world and this world to you.11 Consider, then, what the cross implies, within whose mystery it behooves you henceforth to proceed in this world, since you no longer live, but he lives in you who was crucified for you.12 We ourselves, then, must pass our time in this life with the deportment and aspect of him who hung upon the gibbet for us. Thus, in the words of David, fixing our flesh by the fear of the Lord,13 we may have all our desires and yearnings fixed to his dying and not subservient to our lust. In this way we shall fulfill the command of the Lord, who said: 'Whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.'14 But you might say: How can a person constantly carry a cross, and how can someone be crucified while he is alive? Listen briefly to my explanation.

XXXV. "Our cross is the fear of the Lord. Just as someone who has been crucified, then, no longer has the ability to move or to turn his limbs in any direction by an act of his mind, neither must we exercise our desires and yearnings in accordance with what is easy for us and gives us pleasure at the moment but in accordance with the law of the Lord and where it constrains us. And just as he

who is fixed to the gibbet of the cross no longer contemplates present realities or reflects on his own affections; is not distracted by worry or care for the morrow;15 is not stirred up by the desire for possessions; is not inflamed by pride or wrangling or envy; does not sorrow over present slights and no longer remembers those of the past; and, although he may still be breathing in his body, believes himself dead in every respect and directs on ahead the gaze of his heart to the place where he is sure that he will go; so also it behooves us who have been crucified by the fear of the Lord to have died to all these things, not only to fleshly vices but to every earthly thing as well, and to have the eyes of our soul set upon the place where we must hope that we shall go at any moment. In this way we shall be able to put to death all our fleshly lusts and feelings.

XXXVI. 1. "Beware, then, lest you ever again take up any of those things that you have renounced and put aside, or, against the Lord's prohibition, be found to have turned away from the field of gospel labor16 and to have clothed yourself in the garment that you had stripped yourself of,17 or turn to the base and earthly lusts and pursuits of this world and, against Christ's command, descend from the heights of perfection and dare to take something of what you renounced and rejected.18 Beware lest you think of your family or of your former feelings, return to the worries and cares of this world, 'put your hand to the plow' (in the words of the Savior) 'and look back,'19 and be unable to lay claim to the kingdom of heaven. 2. Beware lest, when you begin to get some understanding of the psalms and of this profession, you gradually be puffed up and ever think of reviving the pride that you had trampled upon at the start in the ardor of your faith and the totality of your humility. Thus, according to the words of the Apostle, you would build up again what you had destroyed and make yourself a liar. Instead you must abide until the end in the poverty that you professed before God and his angels, and also in the humility and patience with which you begged with many tears to

be received into the monastery when you stayed outside it for ten days. And you must not only persist but also make progress and grow. For it would be a miserable affair if, when you were supposed to advance from your first beginnings and to aim at perfection, you began to slide even from them to still lower things. For it is not he who has begun in these things but he who has persevered in them to the end who will be saved.[20]

XXXVII. "For the wily serpent is ever at our heels—that is, he lies in wait for our end, and he seeks even to the close of our life to overthrow us. Therefore, to have started well and to have seized with full fervor upon the beginnings of renunciation will be of no profit if a fitting end does not in similar fashion crown these things and bring them to their conclusion, and if you have not held on to the humility and poverty of Christ, which you have now professed in his presence, until the last moment of your life, just as you seized upon it. In order to carry this out you must always be on the watch for his heads—that is, the beginnings of your thoughts—and bring them at once to your elder. For thus you will learn to crush his dangerous initiatives, if you are not ashamed to reveal any of them to your elder.

XXXVIII. "Hence, according to the words of Scripture, now that you have set out 'to serve the Lord, remain in the fear of God, and prepare your soul' not for peace or security or pleasure but 'for trials and difficulties.'[21] For 'we must enter the kingdom of God through many tribulations,'[22] inasmuch as 'the gate is narrow and the path is strait which leads to life, and few there are who find it.'[23] Consider, then, that you are one of the chosen few, and do not grow cold through the example and the lukewarmness of the multitude, but live as do the few, so that with the few you may deserve to be found in the kingdom. 'For many are called, but few are chosen.'[24] And small is the flock to whom the Father is pleased to give the inheritance.[25] You should know, therefore, that it is no light sin for someone who has professed perfection to pursue those

things that are imperfect. This state of perfection is arrived at by these steps and following this order:

XXXIX. 1. "The beginning of our salvation and the preserving of it is the fear of the Lord.[26] For by this the rudiments of conversion, the purgation of vice, and the preserving of virtue are acquired by those who are being schooled for the way of perfection. When this has penetrated a person's mind it begets contempt for all things and brings forth the forgetfulness of one's family and a horror of the world itself. By this contempt, however, and by being deprived of all one's possessions, humility is acquired. 2. Humility, in turn, is verified by the following indications: first, if a person has put to death in himself all his desires; second, if he conceals from his elder not only none of his deeds but also none of his thoughts; third, if he commits nothing to his own discretion but everything to his [elder's] judgment and listens eagerly and willingly to his admonitions; fourth, if in every respect he maintains a gracious obedience and a steadfast patience; fifth, if he neither brings injury on anyone else nor is saddened or sorrowful if anyone else inflicts it on him; sixth, if he does nothing and presumes nothing that neither the general rule nor the example of our forebears encourages; seventh, if he is satisfied with utter simplicity and, as being an unfit laborer, considers himself unworthy of everything that is offered him; eighth, if he does not declare with his lips alone that he is inferior to everyone else but believes it in the depths of his heart; ninth, if he holds his tongue and is not loudmouthed; tenth, if he is not ready and quick to laugh. 3. By such indications, and by others like them, true humility is recognized. When it is possessed in truth, it will at once bring you a step higher to love, which has no fear.[27] Then all the things that you used to do out of a certain dread of punishment you will begin to do without any difficulty, as it were naturally, and no longer with a view to punishment or fear of any kind, but out of love for the good itself and out of pleasure in virtue.

XL. “In order to attain more easily to this, you should seek out, while you live in the community, examples of a perfect life that are worthy of imitation; they will come from a few, and indeed from one or two, but not from the many. For, beyond the fact that a life that has been scrutinized and refined is found in few, there is a question of utility to be considered—that a person is more carefully schooled and formed for the perfection of this chosen orientation (namely, the cenobitic life) by the example of one.

XLI. 1. “In order to be able to lay hold of all of this and to abide permanently under this spiritual rule, you must observe the following three things in the community, in accordance with the words of the Psalmist: ‘Like one who was deaf I did not hear, and I was like one who was mute and did not open his mouth. And I became like a man who did not hear, not having any rebukes in his mouth.’28 Thus you too should set out as one who is deaf and mute and blind, so that, apart from looking upon him whom you have chosen to imitate by reason of his perfection, whatever you might see that is less than edifying you will not see, being as it were blind, nor will you be influenced by the authority or appearance of those who do these things and be betrayed into something worse that you had formerly condemned. 2. If you hear that anyone is disobedient, insolent, or disparaging, or that anyone is doing something differently than was taught to you, you should not stumble and be inveigled into imitating him because of such an example, but, like one who is deaf and does not hear these things in the least, you should ignore them all. If insults or injuries are inflicted on you or on anyone else, be steadfast and pay heed to a vindictive retort as would a mute person, repeating over and over again in your heart the verse of the Psalmist: ‘I said: I will guard my ways lest I sin with my tongue. I set a guard at my mouth when the sinner stood against me. I was dumb and was humbled, and I did not speak of good things.’29

3. “But, before anything else, practice this fourth thing, which

will adorn and commend the three that we have just spoken of—namely, in accordance with the Apostle's precept, make yourself foolish in this world so that you may be wise[30] by scrutinizing nothing and examining nothing of what has been enjoined on you; instead, always exhibit an obedience characterized by utter simplicity and faith, judging only that as holy, useful, and wise which the law of God or the deliberation of your elder has imposed on you. Once you have been well established by training of this kind, you will be able, under this discipline, to abide forever, and you will not be drawn away from the cenobium by any trials of the enemy or by any factions.

XLII. "Hence you must not expect your patience to come from anyone else's virtuousness—that is, so that you will only possess it when no one else irritates you (which it does not lie in your power to prevent from happening)—but rather from your own humility and forbearance, which depends on your will.

XLIII. "And so that all these things, which have been discussed at some length, may the more easily be impressed upon your heart and fixed very firmly in your mind, I shall summarize them in such a way that you may be able to remember everything in the form of a brief compendium of these precepts. Hear, then, in a few words the method by which you will be able to ascend to the highest perfection without any effort or difficulty.

"According to the Scriptures, 'the beginning' of our salvation and 'of wisdom is the fear of the Lord.' From the fear of the Lord is born a salutary compunction. From compunction of heart there proceeds renunciation—that is, the being deprived of and the contempt of all possessions. From this deprivation humility is begotten. From humility is generated the dying of desire. When desire has died all the vices are uprooted and wither away. Once the vices have been expelled the virtues bear fruit and grow. When virtue abounds purity of heart is acquired. With purity of heart the perfection of apostolic love is possessed."

Textual References

1. Cf. Mt 6:19–34.
2. Cf. Mt 6:34.
3. Cf. Ex 18:25.
4. Ps 17:3–4.
5. Cf. Jn 13:14.
6. Ps 20:4.
7. Cf. Gn 22:1–14.
8. Mt 5:14.
9. Eccl 5:4 LXX.
10. Jer 48:10 LXX.
11. Cf. Gal 6:14.
12. Cf. Gal 2:20.
13. Cf. Ps 119:120.
14. Mt 10:38.
15. Cf. Mt 6:34.
16. Cf. Mt 24:18.
17. Cf. Sg 5:3.
18. Cf. Mt 24:17.
19. Lk 9:62.
20. Cf. Mt 24:13.
21. Sir 2:1.
22. Acts 14:21.
23. Mt 7:14.
24. Mt 20:16.
25. Lk 12:32.
26. Cf. Prv 9:10.
27. Cf. 1 Jn 4:18.
28. Ps 38:13–14.
29. Ps 39:1–2.
30. Cf. 1 Cor 3:18.

Notes to the Text

4.1 The Tabennisiots lived in Thebais Secunda in southern Egypt. Tabenna, a deserted village in that region, was the site of Pachomius's first cenobitic foundation c. 320. Cf. *V. prima gr. Pachomii* 12ff. It is also mentioned in *Conlat.* 20.1.2. Tabennisiots are distinguished here from Egyptians presumably because the latter inhabited northern Egypt. The distinction also occurs in 4.17. Cf. also 2.3.1 and the relevant note.

The reference to an obedience that, "among us, one could neither render to another nor demand of another even for a short while" is paralleled by another reference in 4.2 to the inability of monks in "our monasteries" to maintain a lifelong fervent humility and subjection. Likewise, in 4.14f. there is a derogatory remark concerning private work being carried on "in our monasteries," and in 4.15 there is an allusion to some reprehensible conduct that occurs there, some of which it is "not even appropriate to mention." It is unclear whether Cassian is speaking of the monasteries in southern Gaul for which he was responsible when he wrote *The Institutes* or of the Syrian monasteries, including the one where he used to live in Bethlehem, to which he occasionally alludes with some disapproval (cf. the references in the note at praef. 9). The latter seems more likely if only because it is so common in Cassian.

4.3.1 The form for admission to the cenobium that is described here is also recounted in 4.30.3 and *Conlat.* 20.1.3 Cf. the note to the latter. A ten-day period of probation is also mentioned in 4.36.2.

Single copper coin: *Unius nummi.* A coin of the lowest denomination is intended. Cf. also 7.21.

4.3.2 The connection between the accumulation of money and flight from the monastery is also drawn in 7.7.4.

4.4 The idea that those who have contributed to the community from their own resources might think well of themselves for having done so appears also in 4.14 and in Augustine, *Praeceptum* 1.7. Augustine, however, permits such contributions, as does Benedict in *Reg.* 58.24.

4.5 The stripping and clothing spoken of here is briefly mentioned in Pachomius, *Re g.* 49, where a discussion of the symbolism of the act is omitted. Candidates for baptism were also stripped, and the act indicated conformity with the crucified Christ. Cf. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat. myst.* 2.2. Cassian has missed the connection with baptism. Cf. the note at 1.3.

On the image of soldiering, cf. the note at 1.1.1.

The poor—that is,...the body of the brotherhood: This provides an insight into the social composition of the Tabennisiot community and probably of Egyptian monasticism in general. But the implication is that well-off persons were also drawn to the monastic life. On this issue, cf. Gregorio Penco, "La composizione sociale delle comunità monastiche nei primi secoli," *Studia Monastica* 4 (1962): 264–274.

4.7 Whereas Cassian refers to a year's probation for the newly accepted monk in the Tabennisiot community, Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 3.14, mentions three years.

4.9 The disclosure of hidden thoughts is discussed at greater length in *Conlat.* 2.10ff.

That the devil has fiery darts at his disposal with which to attack the Christian is a commonplace. Cf. Eph 6:16 and the note at *Conlat.* 2.13.7ff.

4.10 The individual instances of obedience are given in 4.23ff.

The reference to the preface is to praef. 9.

4.11 *Labsanion* is charlock. Cf. also 4.22.

4.12 The idea of answering the call of obedience immediately, despite being in the midst of one's work, is almost certainly inspired by the accounts of the calls of the apostles in Mt 4:18–22 and 9:9.

The letter that is left unfinished out of obedience is a letter of the alphabet (*littera*); this suggests how painstaking was the process of writing in antiquity. The writer's craft is touched on at some greater length in 5.39.2f.

In *The Conferences,* the principal goal to which all other practices are subordinated is purity of heart, or love. Cf. *Conlat.* 1.7f. Here, however, it is obedience that is given that status. Hence either Cassian consciously or unconsciously changed his mind when writing *The Conferences,* substituting purity of heart for obedience, or purity of heart and obedience are somehow to be equated. The latter seems more likely inasmuch as the ideal of obedience that is proposed by way of examples in 4.23ff. implies an inner freedom that can be identified with purity of heart.

4.13 *Colobium:* Cf. the note at 1.4.

Mafors: Cf. 1.6 and the relevant note.

Melotis: Cf. 1.7.

Mat: This household item, called a *psiathium* and used for both sitting and sleeping, is also mentioned in 5.35; *Conlat.* 1.23.4, 15.1.1. Cf. the note to *Conlat.* 1.23.4.

4.14 Two loaves (*paxamatia*) were the ideal ration for a day, according to *Conlat.* 2.19ff.

On the value of the denarius in Cassian's time, cf. Pauly-Wissowa 5.212.

4.15.1 The passage on possessiveness in the monastery recalls

Conlat. 1.6.1f., 4.21, 9.6.4, 16.6.1, 16.6.4.

4.16.1f. Some of the faults mentioned here appear also in Pachomius's *Rule.* Thus—breaking an earthenware vessel: cf. *Reg.* 125; arriving late for a function: cf. ibid. 9f; holding another's hand: cf. ibid. 95.

4.16.2 The mention of monks sharing the same cell should be noted.

4.17 Reading at meals in Cappadocian monasteries is alluded to in Basil, *Reg. brev. tract.* 180.

Not looking at others while they eat is prescribed in Pachomius, *Re g.* 30.

4.18 Rules for behavior in gardens and orchards are set out in Pachomius, *Reg.* 71, 73, 75ff.

4.19.1 On the term "Orient" here and in 4.22, cf. the note at 3.3.1.

Thus, in fact...carried out by those others: These words effectively describe Abba Pinufius as he is portrayed in 4.30 and *Conlat.* 20.1.3.

4.19.2 On the psalms usually chanted before retiring, cf. Taft 79.

Acts of ignorance and sins committed from human frailty: Cf. *Conlat.* 11.9.5 and the relevant note.

4.19.3 Monday: *Secunda sabbati.* On the use of "hymns" here, cf. the note at 3.5.1.

4.20 The sacredness of monastic property, illustrated by this account, is also underlined by other writers. Cf. Basil, *Reg. brev. tract.* 143f.; Horsiesius, *Catechesis* (CSCO 160.88: "In a word, we have to watch over everything with faith, because the things of the koinonia are not carnal things, as are the

things of the world"); Benedict, *Reg.* 31.10.

A bit of straw: *Tenuem fistucam. Fistuca* (or, better, *festuca*) can also translate as "an insignificant small object," but it is perhaps more likely to be straw here since it appears as such (with the same modifier) in 4.21. Moreover, bits of straw, the residue of plaiting, would certainly be found in both oratory and cell, where work was done.

4.21 The account in this section is noteworthy because it in effect commends what was an act of disobedience to an abba's explicit command. This suggests that the much-vaunted virtue of obedience (cf. 4.10 and 4.23ff.) was, in the end, subordinate to charity.

The mention of the Dead Sea serves as a reminder that Cassian is speaking of "the Orient" and of Palestine in particular rather than of Egypt.

4.22 Which we say must also be observed in our region (*in partibus nostris*): Cassian is presumably referring here to southern Gaul.

Concerning the monastic diet, cf. *Conlat.* 8.1 and the relevant note.

4.23ff. John of Lycon (or Lycopolis) was one of the most famous of the Egyptian monks, and he is also mentioned in *Conlat.* 1.21.1 and 24.26.16f. Cf. the relevant notes, the latter of which refers to the incident involving Emperor Theodosius.

4.24.2ff. The story of the watering of the dry stick is one that has captured the imagination of readers of ascetic literature. It is paralleled, with variations, in *Apophthegmata patrum,* de abbate Ioanne Colobo 1; Sulpicius Severus, *Dial.* 1.19. The chief variation is that in these parallels the dry stick revivifies. Cf. Weber 111–113.

4.24.3 That John should have had to fetch water from nearly two miles away was quite likely the result of his elder's decision to live far from a source of water for ascetic reasons, which was a common practice in the desert. Cf. also 5.36.2 and *Conlat.* 3.1.1 and the relevant note.

4.24.4 Without any change of expression: A similar stolidity of expression is noted in *Conlat.* 19.1.3.

4.25 The sweet odor of his obedience: A pleasing odor is frequently associated with virtuous behavior. Cf. *Conlat.* 1.1 and the relevant note. Presumably the vessel that was thrown out the window was broken, which only contributed to the extravagance of the deed; otherwise the reader would have been told. In Gregory the Great, *Dial.* 2.28, the story is recounted of how Benedict ordered a glass jar full of oil to be thrown out of a window, but when the jar struck the rocks under the window it remained intact, thus demonstrating Benedict's power.

We have a glimpse here of how a monastic dwelling might have been constructed in this period. This one, in which apparently two people lived, seems to have had two stories, with a window in the second. This is at least what the Latin suggests ("go up": *ascende;* "upstairs": *ad superiora*). But it is also possible that the window was located high up in the wall of a single-story dwelling, in which case John would have mounted a piece of furniture.

4.27 The Patermutus who appears here is otherwise unknown; he seems unrelated to the Patermuthius of *Hist. monach. in Aegypto* 10.3ff. One may wonder whether Patermutus is a programmatic name, given that the Latin pater mutus means "mute father."

4.27.3f. On the idea of throwing one's own son into a river in

order to prove one's monastic steadfastness, cf. also *Apophthegmata patrum*, de abbate Sisoe 10; Weber 38–41.

4.29 Comes in this case was most likely an honorary distinction that it would be somewhat anachronistic to translate as "count," as Gibson does. Cf. *Mittellateinisches Wörterbuch* (Munich, 1974), s.v. comes.

4.30.2ff. The Pinufius of these chapters is identical with the one of *Conlat.* 20. Cf. the introduction to that conference.

4.30.2 Panephysis is mentioned in *Conlat.* 7.26.6, 11.3, 20.1.2. Cf. the note at the first.

4.31 Cassian here specifically mentions the cave in which Christ was born. Cf. also *Conlat.* 17.5.2 and the relevant note.

The allusion to the fact that Egyptian monks visited the "holy places" of Palestine is further proof of the immense popularity that these places enjoyed from the fourth century on. It is also a perhaps unexpected indication that the monks of Egypt had a certain mobility, despite the emphasis on leaving one's cell as infrequently as possible, for which cf. *Conlat.* 6.15 and the relevant note.

4.34f. The equation of renunciation and crucifixion, in a cenobitic context, looks forward to the words of *Conlat.* 19.8.: "The end of the cenobite is to put to death and to crucify all his desires."

4.34 The words on renunciation here are similar to those in 12.25.

Pinufius anticipates questions that might be asked by a biblical literalist when he says: "How can a person constantly carry a cross...?" That a literal understanding of such scriptural passages was a real danger can be seen from *Conlat.*

8.3.4.

4.36.1 Beware lest you think of your family: Thinking of one's family was a temptation peculiar to desert-dwellers, and forgetting one's family (cf. 4.39.1) was a significant accomplishment. Cf. *Conlat.* 24.1.2ff. and the relevant note.

4.36.2 The mention of the profession of poverty (*nuditas*) made before God and his angels recalls the profession of faith made by the martyr before the same witnesses, when he in his fashion is also *nudus.* Cf. Origen, *Exhort. ad mart.* 18; idem, *Hom. in Num.* 25.5; Cyprian, *Ep.* 58.8. In 4.37 the monk's profession is simply said to be made before Christ. Recall also the *nuditas* of baptism. Cf. the note at 4.5.

4.36.2f. That a good beginning does not guarantee a good end, and that everything depends on the end, is discussed at length in *Conlat.* 3.3ff.

4.37 His heads: Namely, the heads of the serpent, or Satan. Gibson finds here an allusion to Gn 3:15, but there is almost certainly an allusion as well to the many-headed monster of classical antiquity, the hydra, which was destroyed by Hercules. Cf. Virgil, *Aen.* 6.576, 7.658. Note that "heads" (*capita*) can have the meaning of both "beginnings" (*principia*) and "initiatives" (*initia*).

4.39.2 His judgment and...his admonitions: Namely, those of the elder.

On laughter, the controlling of which is the tenth indication of humility, cf. the note at *Conlat.* 4.20.3.

4.39.3 The relationship between love and fear is discussed at some length in *Conlat.* 11.13, and a more nuanced position is taken there.

FIFTH BOOK: THE SPIRIT OF GLUTTONY

Chapters

I. The transition from the institutes of the monks to the struggle with the eight principle vices.

II. That the causes of the vices are not known by everyone, although they exist in everyone, and that in order to expose them we need the help of the Lord.

III. That our first struggle is against the spirit of glut-tony—that is, the desire to gormandize.

IV. A testimony of Abba Antony, by which he teaches that a given virtue must be sought after from one who possesses it to a particular degree.

V. That a uniform rule of fasting cannot be kept by everyone.

VI. That the mind is not inebriated by wine alone.

VII. Why weakness of flesh cannot stand in the way of purity of heart.

VIII. That food must be taken for the sake of the end of perfect abstinence.

IX. On the degree of discipline to be undertaken, and on the remedy provided by fasting.

X. Abstinence from food cannot be sufficient for maintaining purity of mind and body.

XI. The desires of the body cannot be extinguished unless all the vices are uprooted.

XII. The spiritual combat must be modeled on the fleshly combat.

XIII. That, unless we have been freed from the vice of gormandizing, we can never attain to the struggles of the inner man.

XIV. How the desire to gormandize can be overcome.

XV. How a monk must always be intent upon maintaining the purity of his heart.

XVI. That a monk, as is the case with the Olympic contests, cannot engage in spiritual struggles unless he has won in fleshly battles.

XVII. That the foundation and basis of the spiritual combat lie in the contest with gluttony.

XVIII. By how many kinds of contests and victories the blessed Apostle rose to the crown of the loftiest combat.

XIX. That for the athletes of Christ, as long as they dwell in the body, there is no end to the struggle.

XX. That the monk must not take any food outside the set time if he wishes to attain to the struggles of the contests within.

XXI. On the inner peace of the monk and on spiritual abstinence.

XXII. That it behooves us to exercise bodily abstinence so that we may thereby attain to the spiritual fast.

XXIII. What the monk's food ought to be like.

XXIV. That in Egypt we saw the daily fasts broken without further ado upon our arrival.

XXV. The abstinence of an old man, who took food six times so as to feed someone who was hungry.

XXVI. On the old man who never took food alone in his cell.

XXVII. What Abbas Paesius and John declared about the fruit of their way of living.

XXVIII. The example that Abba John offered to his disciples and left them when he was about to die.

XXIX. On Abba Machetes, who never slept during spiritual conferences but always fell asleep during worldly tales.

XXX. On judging no one, from the same old man.

XXXI. The rebuke of the same old man, when he saw brothers who slept during spiritual conferences waking up at the telling of an idle tale.

XXXII. On the letters that were burned without being read.

XXXIII. The answer to a question, which Abba Theodore deserved to receive because of his prayers.

XXXIV. Some words of the same old man by which he taught with what efforts a monk could attain to the knowledge of Scripture.

XXXV. The rebuke of the same old man, when he came to my cell in the middle of the night.

XXXVI. A description of the desert in Diolcos, where anchorites dwell.

XXXVII. On the cells that were given to us by Abba Archebius, along with their contents.

XXXVIII. On the debt that Abba Archebius paid off by manual labor on his mother's behalf.

XXXIX. By what device of a certain old man manual labor was provided for Abba Symeon when he had nothing to do.

XL. On the boys who died of hunger in the desert when bringing some figs to a sick man, which they did not taste.

XLI. Some words of Abba Macarius on the behavior of a monk, as one who was to live for a very long time and as one who was to die daily.

I. We compose this fifth book with the help of God. For after four books, which have treated of the institutes of the monasteries, we now set ourselves to take up the struggle against the eight principal vices, thanks to your prayers and strengthened by the Lord. These are, first, gluttony, which is understood as the desire to gormandize; second, fornication; third, filargyria, which means avarice or, better expressed, the love of money; fourth, anger;

fifth, sadness; sixth, acedia, which is anxiety or weariness of heart; seventh, cenodoxia, which means vain or empty glory; eighth, pride. As now we enter into this combat, O most blessed Pope Castor, we stand all the more urgently in need of your prayers—first, so that we may worthily investigate their natures, which are so intricate, so hidden, and so obscure; then, so that we may adequately lay bare their causes; and third, so that we may suitably propose cures and remedies for them.

II. 1. Although the causes of these passions are recognized by everyone as soon as they have been exposed by the teachings of the elders, until they have been revealed they are unknown to everyone, even though we are all hurt by them and they are found in everyone. But we are confident that we can explain them somewhat if, through your prayers, that word of the Lord is also addressed to us which was uttered through Isaiah: 2. "I will go before you and I will humble the powerful of the earth. I will smash bronze gates and I will break iron bolts. And I will open to you hidden treasures and concealed secrets."[1] Then the word of God will precede us and first humble the powerful of our earth—that is, these same harmful passions that we wish to subdue and that claim dominion for themselves and a most cruel tyranny in our mortal body—and it will make them submit to our investigation and our exposure. And, breaking open the gates of ignorance and smashing the bolts of the vices that shut us out from true knowledge, it will lead us to our concealed secrets and, according to the Apostle, it will, once we have been enlightened, reveal to us "the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of hearts."[2] 3. Thus, penetrating the dark shadows of our vices with the most pure eyes of our soul, we shall be able to expose them and to bring them into the light, and we shall be in a position to disclose their causes and natures both to those who are free of them and to those who are still under their sway. In this way, according to the prophet, we shall pass through the fire of the vices that burn our minds most terribly and immediately be able to

pass unharmed as well through the waters of the virtues that extinguish them,3 and, bedewed with spiritual remedies, we shall deserve, thanks to our purity of heart, to be led to a place of refreshment and perfection.

III. And so the first contest upon which we must enter is against gluttony, which we have referred to as the desire to gormandize, and in the first place, as we begin to speak of the method of fasting and the quality of food, we have recourse once more to the traditions and laws of the Egyptians. Everyone knows that they contain a loftier discipline with respect to abstinence and a perfect degree of discretion.

IV. 1. For it is an ancient and admirable saying of the blessed Antony to the effect that when a monk, after having opted for the cenobium, is striving to attain to the heights of a still loftier perfection, has seized upon the consideration of discretion and is already able to rely upon his own judgment and to come to the pinnacle of the anchorite life, he must not seek all the kinds of virtue from one person, however outstanding he may be. For there is one who is adorned with the flowers of knowledge, another who is more strongly fortified by the practice of discretion, another who is solidly founded in patience, one who excels in the virtue of humility and another in that of abstinence, while still another is decked with the grace of simplicity, this one surpasses the others by his zeal for magnanimity, that one by mercy, another one by vigils, yet another by silence, and still another by toil. 2. Therefore the monk who, like a most prudent bee, is desirous of storing up spiritual honey must suck the flower of a particular virtue from those who possess it more intimately, and he must lay it up carefully in the vessel of his heart. He must not begrudge a person for what he has less of, but he must contemplate and eagerly gather up only the virtuousness that he possesses. For if we want to obtain all of them from a single individual, either examples will be hard to find or, indeed, there will be none that would be

suitable for us to imitate. The reason for this is that, although we see that Christ has not yet been made "all in all"[4] (to cite the words of the Apostle), we can nonetheless in this fashion find him partly in all. For it is said of him that "by God's doing he was made for us wisdom, righteousness, holiness and redemption."[5] 3. Inasmuch, therefore, as there is wisdom in one, righteousness in another, holiness in another, meekness in another, chastity in another, and humility in another, Christ is now divided among each of the holy ones, member by member. But when all are assembled together in the unity of faith and virtue, he appears as "the perfect man,"[6] completing the fullness of his body in the joining together and in the characteristics of the individual members. Until the time comes, then, when God will be all in all, God can be such presently in the fashion that we have spoken of—that is, by virtues partly in all, although he is not yet all in all with respect to the fullness of them. For, although our religion has one end, there are nonetheless different professions by which to go to God, as will be more fully discussed in the conferences of the elders. 4. Hence we must seek out the rudiments of discretion and abstinence more particularly from those in whom we see these virtues flowing forth more abundantly, due to the grace of the Holy Spirit—not that any one person can by himself obtain what is scattered among many but that, with respect to the good things of which we can be capable, we may be drawn toward the imitation of those who have more particularly acquired them.

V. 1. And so a uniform rule concerning the manner of fasting cannot easily be kept because not all bodies have the same strength, nor is it, like the other virtues, achieved by firmness of mind alone. And therefore, since it does not consist in strength of mind alone, inasmuch as it depends on what the body is capable of, we have accepted the following understanding of it that was passed on to us: There are different times, manners, and qualities with respect to eating that are in accordance with the varied conditions, ages, and sexes of bodies, but there is one rule of discipline

for everyone with regard to an abstinent and virtuous mind. 2. For not everyone is able to prolong a fast for weeks, or to put off eating food for three or even two days. Many people who are worn out by sickness and especially old age cannot endure a fast even until sunset without considerable hardship. A starveling meal of moistened beans does not suit everyone, nor is the frugality of plain vegetables adequate for all, nor is an austere diet of dry bread appropriate for all. One person does not feel full with two pounds, while another is surfeited with a meal of one pound or six ounces. Nonetheless there is one end of abstinence in all these instances—that no one, according to the measure of his own capacity, be burdened by voracious satiety. For it is not only the quality of food but also its quantity that dulls the heart's keenness, and when both the mind and the flesh have been sated the glowing kindling of the wicked vices is set ablaze.

VI. The stomach that has been fed with all kinds of food begets the seeds of lasciviousness, and the mind that is suffocated and weighed down by food cannot be guided by the governance of discretion. It is not an excess of wine alone that ordinarily inebriates the mind. Too much food of any kind makes it stagger and sway and robs it of every possibility of integrity and purity. The reason for the overthrow of the Sodomites and for their lasciviousness was not an excess of wine but a surfeit of bread. Listen to the Lord rebuking Jerusalem by way of the prophet: "How did your sister Sodom sin except by eating her bread in surfeit and abundance?"[7] And because by their surfeit of bread they had been set ablaze with an inextinguishable fire of the flesh, they were consumed by God's judgment by fiery brimstone from heaven.[8] But if a mere excess of bread and the vice of surfeit drove them so abruptly to such dizzying wickedness, what is to be thought of those who with healthy bodies dare to take meat and wine with unbridled freedom, acting thus not because sickness requires it but because a wanton mind has suggested it?

VII. Weakness of flesh does not stand in the way of purity of heart as long as these things are used as frailty and not pleasure demands. More frequently do we see men who abstain utterly from richer foods than we do those who use moderately what is conceded them by reason of necessity, and men who deny themselves everything out of love for abstinence than we do those who observe the limits of sufficiency when they eat because of their weakness. Even weakness of body has its own victorious abstinence when food is granted to the weary flesh, but a person denies himself nourishment—although still needing it—and permits himself to eat only as much as an unyielding discretion with respect to temperance judges sufficient to maintain his life, and not as much as his yearning appetite demands. More delicate viands contribute to the health of the body and do not do away with the purity of chastity if they are taken in moderation. For whatever strength is gained by eating them is consumed by the toil and weariness of care. Hence, just as the virtue of frugality is not foreign to any state of life, so neither indeed is the fullness of integrity denied it.

VIII. And so it is a very true and tested opinion of the fathers that the method of fasting and abstaining consists exclusively in the degree of frugality and in discipline, and that this is the end of perfect virtue for all alike—that, even while still desiring it, we should approach with restraint the food that we are obliged to eat in order to sustain our lives. For although a person may be weak in body, he will possess perfect virtue, in every respect equal to that of those who are hale and hearty, if with rigorous mind he disciplines the desires that are not due to the weakness of the flesh. The Apostle says: "Do not make provision for the flesh in its desires."[9] He did not, therefore, utterly forbid making provision for it, but he forbade doing so "in its desires." He excluded a concern for the pleasures of the flesh (lest by catering to the flesh we slip into the harmful concerns of the desires), but he did not reject the necessary maintenance of life (lest a body damaged by

our neglect be unable to carry out spiritual and necessary functions).

IX. The totality of abstinence, then, consists not only in the setting of times and the quality of food but, more than anything else, in the judgment of one's conscience. For each individual must calculate for himself the degree of frugality that his bodily struggle and combat require. The canonical rule for fasting is useful indeed and by all means to be observed, but unless this is followed by temperate eating habits it will be unable to attain to the goal of integrity. For when the emptiness that comes from long fasts is followed by bodily satiety, the result is a period of heaviness rather than chaste purity. Integrity of mind is closely connected with an empty stomach. Whoever is not content with maintaining a constant and even temperance does not possess an enduring and chaste purity. Even the strictest fasts are nullified when a period of relaxation and abundance follows them, and they immediately descend into the vice of gluttony. Better is a reasonable and modest daily repast than harsh and lengthy fasts every now and again. Immoderate fasting is capable not only of destroying the steadfastness of the mind but also, due to bodily weariness, of emasculating the efficacy of prayer.

X. Mere abstinence from food is not enough to maintain the integrity of mind and body unless other virtues are also present in the soul. Humility must be learned first, then, through virtuous obedience, grinding toil, and bodily fatigue. Not only must the possession of money be shunned but even the desire for it must be plucked out by its roots. For it is not enough not to possess it (which is often the result of impecuniousness); one must not even have the desire to possess it if perchance it has been offered. The wrath of anger must be crushed; the dejection of sorrow must be overcome; cenodoxia—that is, vainglory—must be despised; the arrogance of pride must be trampled upon; the wavering and wandering rovings of the mind itself must also be reined in by the

constant recollection of God; and we must lead the slippery and straying heart back to the contemplation of God as often as the crafty foe attempts to prevent our mind from looking upon him when he steals into the depths of our heart.

XI. 1. For it is impossible for the fiery impulses of the body to be extinguished until the shoots of the other principle vices have themselves been cut off at the root; of them we shall treat individually, each in its proper place, in different books, with the Lord's help. What we have set out to discuss now is gluttony (that is, the desire to gormandize), which constitutes our first conflict. Whoever is unable to check the desire to gormandize will be incapable of curbing the urges of burning lust. The chastity of the inner man is discerned in the perfection of this virtue. For you will never be confident of a person's ability to struggle against stronger adversaries if you see him overcome by smaller and weaker ones in a less strenuous conflict. For all the virtues possess a single nature although it is divided into many species and names, just as gold is a single substance although it takes the shape of many and various kinds of adornments in accordance with the skill and wish of the craftsman. And so whoever is seen to have failed in some of them obviously possesses none of them perfectly. 2. For how can a person be believed to have extinguished the searing emotions of lust, which are set ablaze not only at the body's behest but even by the mind's wickedness, if he has been unable to dull the stings of anger that crowd upon him from an intemperate heart alone? Or how can he be thought to have blunted the lascivious urges of body and soul if he could not overcome the simple vice of pride? Or how can he be believed to have trampled upon the wantonness inherent in the flesh if he has not succeeded in renouncing the desire for money, which is external and foreign to our constitution? In what way will he triumph in the war between the flesh and the soul if he is not equal to curing the disease of sadness? However high the walls may be that protect a city, and however unyielding its shut gates, it will be destroyed by the

betrayal of even the smallest back door. For what difference does it make if the wicked enemy enters the city over its highest ramparts or through its broad portals, or if he does so through narrow and hidden passages?

XII. 1. "He who contends in the games is not crowned unless he has fought lawfully."[10] Whoever wants to extinguish the natural yearnings of the flesh must first make an effort to overcome the vices that are foreign to nature. For, if we wish to understand the thrust of the Apostle's words concerning the laws and discipline of this world's games, we must first recognize that only by comparison can we know what the blessed Apostle wanted to teach us, by way of this example, as we struggle in the spiritual contest. For in the former contest, which, according to the same Apostle, offers the victors "a corruptible crown,"[11] it is customary (in the case of the Olympic and Pythian Games) for the person who is striving to ready himself for the crown of glory, adorned with the privilege of immunity, and who desires to exert himself in the loftiest struggles, first to demonstrate his talents as a youth and the effectiveness of his initial training. In this way young men who desire to put themselves forward for these disciplines are tested, in the judgment both of him who presides over the games and of all the people, as to whether they deserve to be and should be admitted to them. 2. And when a man has been carefully examined and, in the first place, has been found to be unbesmirched by any personal notoriety; and he has then been judged not to be ignoble by reason of the yoke of slavery, which would make him unworthy of this discipline and of mingling with those who qualify for it; and, third, if he offers appropriate proof of his skill and his strength and, in contests with his juniors and his peers, has demonstrated both his proficiency and his strength as a young man; and if he has gone beyond boyish contests and, with his strength now honed by lengthy practice, has, after the presider's trial, received permission to join those who have been approved; and if by his unremitting efforts he has not only shown that he is their equal in

strength but has also frequently obtained the palm of victory from among them—only then will he deserve to participate in the noble contests, in which the right to compete is given to none but victors alone and those who have been adorned with the tributes of numerous crowns. If we have grasped the example taken from fleshly combat, we ought also, by comparison with it, to understand the discipline and the order of the spiritual contest.

XIII. We too must first demonstrate that we are free from subjection to the flesh. "A person is the slave of the one by whom he is conquered."12 And: "Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin."13 And when the examination of him who presides over the contest has found us unbesmirched by the notoriety of any base lust, and he has not judged us to be slaves of the flesh, ignoble and unworthy of the Olympic struggles with vice, then we shall be able to do battle against our peers—that is, against the desires and movements of the flesh and the disturbances of the soul. For it is impossible for a full stomach to undertake the struggles of the inner man, nor is it right for someone to be made trial of by more violent battles if he can be overcome in a less important conflict.

XIV. 1. The desire to gormandize, then, is the first thing that we must trample upon, to the point that the mind must be refined not only by fasting but also by vigils, as well as by reading and by frequent compunction of heart. In doing this it is made aware of when, perchance, it has been deluded and been overcome. At one time groaning with horror over its vices and at another set ablaze with desire for perfection and integrity, and both taken up with and possessed by concerns and meditations of this sort, it will at length recognize that the eating of food is not so much a concession to enjoyment as it is a burden imposed upon it at intervals, and it will see it as a necessity for the body and not as something desirable for the soul.

2. Armed with zealous mind and constant compunction we shall dull the wantonness of the flesh (which is the more vehemently

inflated by the heat of food) and its hurtful stings, and with an abundance of tears and with the weeping of our heart we shall thus be able to extinguish the furnace of our body, which is enkindled when the Babylonian king constantly offers us opportunities for sin and vice by which we are burned up more violently than by naphtha and pitch.14 Thereupon the grace of God will breathe its dew and will rustle in our hearts, and the seething emotions of fleshly lust will at once be able to be lulled to sleep.

3. This is our first contest, then; this is, as it were, our first trial in the Olympic Games—the extinguishing of the belly's desire to gormandize out of a yearning for perfection. To this end not only must a superfluous appetite for food be trampled upon by the contemplation of virtue, but even what is necessary for nature itself must be eaten with anxious heart, as being contrary to chastity. Only thus is our life's course to be laid out, so that there is no longer any time wherein we may feel that we are being diverted from spiritual pursuits beyond that which compels us to descend to the necessary care of the body, on account of its fragility. 4. And when we are made to submit to this out of necessity and are attending to the requirements of life rather than to the desires of the mind, we should hasten to get it over with as quickly as possible, as being something that keeps us from salutary pursuits. For we shall never be able to spurn the pleasures of eating here and now if our mind is not fixed on divine contemplation and if it does not take delight, instead, in the love of virtue and the beauty of heavenly things. And so a person will despise all present realities as vain if he fixes his mind's gaze inseparably on what is immovable and eternal, contemplating now in his heart, while he is still in the flesh, the blessedness of his future dwelling.

XV. It is like a person who is making an effort to hit at a splendid prize for excellence, which is situated high up and designated by small indicators. With the keenest gaze he estimates the trajectory of the dart, knowing that the great palm of glory and the prize and

reward depend upon his accurate vision. He shuts out every other object from his sight, directing it to where it is necessary, where he sees the point with its reward and prize. There is no doubt that the palm of skill and the reward of excellence will elude him if the line of his sight deviates ever so slightly.

XVI. 1. When the desire of the belly and of gormandizing has been overcome thanks to this vision and, as in the Olympic disciplines, we have been declared neither slaves of the flesh nor persons of bad reputation from having been tainted with vice, we ourselves shall be judged worthy to compete in the higher contests. Once we have established our credentials in this way, we too shall be believed capable of contending against the evil spirits, which deign to struggle only with the victorious and with those who deserve to fight in the spiritual combat. For the very first thing that must be done in every struggle, so to speak, is to destroy the impulses of the fleshly desires. For no one whose own flesh has not been overcome will be able to compete lawfully, and he who does not compete lawfully will certainly be unable to engage in the contest or to be victorious and win a glorious crown.

2. But if we have been overcome in this contest and have demonstrated that we are the slaves of fleshly desire because we do not bear the tokens of freedom and strength, we shall immediately, to our public embarrassment, be withdrawn from the spiritual struggles and combats as unworthy and as slaves. "For everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin."15 And what is said to those among whom fornication is mentioned will be said to us by the blessed Apostle: "No trial has seized you except what is common to humanity."16 For, if our mind's strength has not been put to the test and if we have not been able to subject the frail and resistant flesh to our spirit, we shall not be in a position to undertake more serious struggles with the evil beings of the air. There are some who, not understanding the Apostle's testimony, have substituted the optative mood for the indicative. Thus: "May no trial seize you

except what is common to humanity." What he says, however, is clearly intended not as a wish but as a declaration or a rebuke.

XVII. 1. Do you want to listen to the true athlete of Christ as he engages by lawful right in the combat? "I do not run," he says, "in uncertainty. I do not fight as one beating against the air. But I chastise my body and subject it to servitude, lest when preaching to others I be rejected myself."17 You see that he has found the most important aspect of the struggle in himself—that is, in his own flesh—and that he considers this to be an absolutely fundamental principle; and you see that he has linked the outcome of the fight solely to the chastisement of his flesh and the subjection of his body. And so "I do not run in uncertainty." 2. He does not run in uncertainty because, in looking upon the heavenly Jerusalem, he is clear as to where his swift and undeviating heart should be directed. He does not run in uncertainty because, "forgetting what is behind," he stretches himself out "to what is before," pressing "on to the goal, to the prize of the heavenly calling of God in Christ Jesus."18 Ever directing his mind's gaze to this and hastening to it with utter alacrity of heart, he cried out confidently: "I have fought the good fight, I have won the race, I have kept the faith."19 And because he knew that he had run tirelessly and with swift and devoted mind "after the fragrance of the ointments" of Christ,20 and that by chastising his flesh he had won the contest and the spiritual struggle, he confidently adds these words: "Now, a crown of righteousness has been set aside for me, which the Lord, the just judge, will bestow on me on that day."21 3. And, in order to open to us as well a similar hope of reward, if we should wish to imitate him in his strenuous race, he added: "But not only on me but on all who love his coming."22 Thus he declares that we shall have a part in his crown on the day of judgment if we love the coming of Christ—not only when he will appear even to the unwilling but also as he daily visits holy souls— and if we obtain victory in the contest by chastising our bodies. Of this coming the Lord says in the Gospel: "I and my Father shall come to him and we

shall make our dwelling with him."[23] And again: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I shall go in to him and I shall eat with him and he with me."[24]

XVIII. 1. But he not only observes that he has finished the struggle of the race when he says: "I do not run in uncertainty." (This has particular reference to the attentiveness of his mind and to the fervor of his spirit, with which he follows Christ with the utmost ardor, while repeating with the bride: "I have run after you in the fragrance of your ointments."[25] And again: "My soul has clung to you."[26]) He also bears witness that he has been victorious in another kind of struggle when he says: "I do not fight as one beating against the air. But I chastise my body and subject it to servitude." This pertains especially to the pains of abstinence, bodily fasting, and the affliction of the flesh. He describes himself thereby as one wrestling strenuously with his flesh, and he declares that he has not struck the blow of abstinence against it in vain but has won the fight by putting his body to death. Now that it has been chastised by the blows of abstinence and struck by the boxing gloves of fasting, he has conferred on his victorious spirit the crown of deathlessness and the palm of incorruption.

2. You see the lawful sequence of the struggle and you observe the outcome of the spiritual contest and how the skilled athlete of Christ, like a lofty victor, wins out over his rebellious flesh, having as it were placed it under his feet. And therefore he does "not run in uncertainty," because he was sure that he would forthwith enter the holy and heavenly city of Jerusalem. It is thus that he fights—namely, with fasting and fleshly affliction. He is not like "one beating against the air"—that is, offering the blows of abstinence in vain; with them, by the chastisement of his body, he beats not against the empty air but against the spirits that dwell in it. For when a person says that he is not like "one beating against the air," he means that he is not beating against the void and empty

air, despite appearances, but against something in the air. Because he overcame in these kinds of contests and made his advance honored with the tributes of many crowns, not unjustifiably does he begin to engage in combat with stronger foes, and now that he has triumphed over his former rivals he cries out with confidence and says: "Our struggle is no longer against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against spirits of evil in heavenly places."[27]

XIX. 1. Victory in the contests is never wanting to the athlete of Christ as he dwells in the flesh, but the stronger he grows through successive triumphs, the more demanding the series of struggles that awaits him. For once he has subjected and conquered his flesh, how many throngs of the adversary, how many enemy armies rise up against the victorious soldier of Christ, spurred on by his triumphs! Otherwise the soldier of Christ would yield to the slackness of peace, begin to forget his glorious struggles and contests, grow negligent as a result of sluggish security, and be deprived of the tributes of his prizes and the deserts of his triumphs.

2. And so, if we wish, as our strength increases, to mount to these levels of triumph, it behooves us as well to engage in the struggles and contests in the same order and to say with the Apostle first: "I do not fight as one beating against the air. But I chastise my body and subject it to servitude." Then, once we have overcome in this conflict, we shall be able to say with him: "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against spirits of evil in heavenly places." For otherwise we shall never be able to contend with them, nor shall we deserve to engage in spiritual combat, having been overcome in the fleshly conflict and been defeated in the battle with our belly, and justifiably will the Apostle say to us reproachfully: "No trial has seized you except what is common to humanity."

XX. Hence the monk who wishes to advance to the struggles of the inner contest should first beware of ever allowing himself to take anything to drink or to eat, as one who is overcome by pleasure of any sort, before the lawful station and the usual time for eating, apart from table. Neither, once the meal is done, should he permit himself to take either of these things, in however small a portion, and he must likewise observe the canonical time for and amount of sleep. These wanton pleasures of the mind are to be cut off with the same zeal as the vice of harlotry would be cut away. For if a person has been unable to restrain the unnecessary appetites of the palate, how will he succeed in extinguishing the seething emotions of fleshly desire? And if he has been unable to curb legitimate and insignificant passions that are in the open, how will he, under the governance of discretion, be able to fight against hidden ones that itch him when no one is looking? Therefore with every movement and with each desire the soul's strength is put to the test. Each individual's conscience bears witness as to whether it can hold out against great, domineering, and hidden desires if it is vanquished by slight and overt ones.

XXI. 1. For it is no external adversary that we must fear: The foe is within us, and every day we wage an inner war. Once it has been conquered, everything that is outside will be weakened and all things will be subdued and subjected to the soldier of Christ. We shall not have an adversary outside of us to be afraid of if what is within us has been overcome and has yielded to the Spirit. And we should not believe that mere fasting from visible food can suffice for our perfection of heart and purity of body if a fasting of the soul has not also been joined to it. 2. For it has its own harmful foods by which it is fattened even without excessive eating and as a result of which it tumbles down the precipices of dissolution. Its food is detraction, and it is delightful indeed. Its food is anger as well, and even if it is very slight it nonetheless feeds it with this miserable nourishment for a while and at the same time prostrates it with its lethal savor. Envy is the food of the mind, corrupting it

with its poisonous juices and constantly and ceaselessly torturing the wretch with someone else's prosperity and success. 3. Cenodoxia—that is, vainglory—is its food, and it pleases it with its delicious taste for a while, but afterwards it strips it, lays it bare, despoils it of every virtue, and dismisses it barren and bereft of all its spiritual fruits, not only causing it to lose the deserts of its arduous labors but even heaping up greater torments. Every desire and wandering of the feckless heart is a kind of sustenance for the soul, supplying it with harmful foods but thereafter leaving it destitute of heavenly bread and of solid nourishment. 4. If, then, by a most sacred fast we abstain from these as much as we are able, we shall well and aptly observe bodily fasting. For fleshly toil joined to a contrite spirit will produce a sacrifice most acceptable to God and a worthy dwelling for holiness in the pure and clean depths of our heart. But if, when fasting in bodily wise, we involve ourselves in vices most ruinous to the soul, fleshly affliction will profit us nothing, contaminated as we are in our more precious part and transgressing in the very substance by which we are made the dwelling of the Holy Spirit. 5. For it is not the corruptible flesh but rather the pure heart that is made a dwelling for God and a temple of the Holy Spirit.[28] While the outer man fasts, then, it behooves the inner one as well to abstain from harmful foods and, in particular, to make himself pure for God so that he may deserve to welcome Christ in himself as his guest, as the blessed Apostle teaches in these words: "May Christ," he says, "dwell in the inner man through faith in your hearts."[29]

XXII. And so we should know, then, that we must devote ourselves to the toil of bodily abstinence in order to be able to arrive by this fasting at purity of heart. But this toil will be useless for us, even if we sustain it tirelessly with a view to the end but are unable to attain to the end on account of which we have put up with such great afflictions. It would have been better to have abstained from the forbidden foods of the soul than to have engaged in bodily fasting from things indifferent and less harmful.

For in the latter case the simple and harmless taking of a creature of God is without sin in itself, but in the former it is, in the first place, the wicked devouring of the brothers. Of this it is said: "Do not love slander, lest you be destroyed."[30] And blessed Job says of anger and envy: "Anger slays the fool, and envy kills the child."[31] It should likewise be observed that he who is angered is a fool and that he who is envious is considered to be a child. For the former is not unjustifiably declared to be a fool for willingly bringing death upon himself by letting himself be provoked by angry urges, and the latter proves that, in his envy, he is an immature child; for when he is envious he attests that the one whose prosperity is torturing him is greater than he is.

XXIII. 1. Hence food must be selected that not only tempers the seething emotions of burning desire and is less likely to inflame them but that is also easy to prepare, cheap to purchase, and appropriate for the way of life of the brothers and for their needs. For there are three kinds of gluttony—first, that which urges the anticipation of the canonical hour for eating; then, that which rejoices only in filling the belly to repletion with any food whatsoever; and third, that which is delighted with more refined and delicate foods. Against this, then, the monk must keep a threefold watch—that is, first, to wait for the lawful moment for breaking the fast; then, to be satisfied with a slender diet; and third, to be content with cheaper foods of whatever sort. 2. The most ancient tradition of the fathers declares that whatever is eaten that does not fall under regular practice and common usage is polluted by the disease of vanity, boastfulness, and ostentation. Of those whom we have seen shining out by reason of their knowledge and discretion and whom the grace of Christ has set before all as splendid lights to be imitated, we have not known anyone who has abstained from eating that bread of theirs which is cheap and unrefined; nor of those who have rejected this rule, given up the use of bread, and pursued a diet of beans and vegetables or fruit have we ever seen anyone counted among the most

virtuous and endowed with the grace of discretion and of knowledge. 3. For they not only decreed that a monk should not ask for foods that are unusual in others' eyes, lest his manner of life be as it were exposed openly to all and he, having become foolish and empty, perish of the disease of vainglory; but they also declared that the common discipline of fasting should not casually be disclosed to anyone but should, as far as possible, be hidden and concealed. They were of the opinion, rather, that if some brothers paid a visit it was better to practice the virtue of hospitality and love than to display the strictness of our abstinence and the daily rigor of our chosen orientation, and that we should not pay heed to what our wishes and well-being and the ardor of our desire demanded but should willingly provide and fulfill what the relaxation and weakness of our visitor required.

XXIV. When from the regions of Syria we sought out the province of Egypt in our desire to learn the ordinances of the elders, we were astonished that we were welcomed there so heartwarmingly. So much was this the case that no rule (such as we had learned in the monasteries of Palestine) regarding eating before the fixed period for fasting was over was ever observed, but apart from the fasts of the fourth and sixth days, imposed by law, the daily station was dispensed with wherever we went. When we asked why they thus omitted the daily fasts without further ado, one of the elders replied: "Fasting is ever with me, but since I am soon going to send you on your way I shall not always be able to keep you with me. And fasting, as beneficial and necessary as it may be, is nonetheless a gift that is voluntarily offered, whereas the requirements of the commandment demand that the work of love be carried out. And so I welcome Christ in you and must refresh him.32 But when I show you on your way I shall be able to make up for the hospitality extended on his behalf by a stricter fast of my own. For 'the children of the bridegroom cannot fast as long as the bridegroom is with them,'33 but when the bridegroom departs, then they will rightly fast."

XXV. When one of the elders was urging me, as I was eating, to take a little bit more, and I had said that I was unable, he responded: "I have already set the table six times for different brothers who have stopped by, and in urging each one I ate with them all, and I am still eating. And you say, although you are eating now for the first time, that you can't take any more!"

XXVI. We met someone else who was living in the desert and who testified that he never permitted himself food when he was alone. Even if for five full days none of the brothers stopped by his cell he would put off his meal until, on his way to church on Saturday or Sunday in order to participate in the devout assembly, he came across a stranger. He would bring him back from there to his cell and join in a meal with him—not out of bodily need but for hospitality's sake and for the brother's own good.

And so, as they know how to leave off the daily fasts without further ado when brothers pay a visit, by the same token, once they have departed, they make up for the eating that they have allowed themselves on their account with a greater abstinence, rigorously compensating for the taking of even a little bit of food not only by a harsher discipline with respect to bread but even by a lessening of sleep itself.

XXVII. When the elder John, who was the superior of a large cenobium and of numerous brothers, came to visit the elder Paesius who was living in the vast desert and asked him, as having been a companion of his of long standing, what he had done throughout the forty years that he had been separated from him in the desert and had not been disturbed by the brothers, he said: "The sun has never seen me eating." And the other said: "Nor me angry."

XXVIII. When the same old man was joyously departing as it were for his own and was already on the point of breathing his last, the brothers who were anxiously standing around him beseeched him humbly if he would leave them some command to

remember as a kind of bequest, whereby they would be able—thanks to the brevity of the precept—to attain more easily to the summit of perfection. Groaning, he said: "Never have I done my own will, nor have I ever taught anyone what I did not first do myself."

XXIX. We met an old man named Machetes who lived at a distance from the throngs of the brothers and who, after lengthy prayer, obtained this grace from the Lord—that whenever a spiritual conference was held, by day or by night, he would never be overcome by sleepiness. But if anyone made an attempt to say something slanderous or foolish, he would at once fall asleep, and the poisonous abuse would be unable to pollute his ears.

XXX. 1. When this same old man was teaching us that we should not judge anyone, he said that there were three things concerning which he had spoken to the brothers and rebuked them— namely, that some had allowed their uvula to be cut off, that they had a blanket in their cells, and that they had blessed oil and given it to worldly persons who had asked for it, and he said that he had done all these things himself. "For," he said, "I contracted a disease of the uvula and for a long time was wasting away because of the sickness until, out of sheer pain and moved by the urging of all the elders, I had it cut off. 2. As a result of this sickness I also had to have a blanket. And thus I was compelled, too, to bless oil and to give it to those who requested it (which I loathed more than anything else because I judged that it came from great presumption of heart) inasmuch as there were so many worldly people around me all of a sudden. I would have been utterly unable to get rid of them had they not obliged me, with all their pressure and entreaties, to place my hand on a small jar that they had given me and to make the sign of the cross upon it; and so, believing that they had obtained blessed oil, they eventually left me alone. 3. From all of this it became quite clear to me that the monk is wrapped up in the same situations and vices that he presumes to

judge in others. And so each person ought to judge himself alone and in every respect to be careful and cautious not to analyze other people's way of life and behavior, in keeping with the Apostle's precept: 'Why do you judge your brother? He stands or falls to his own master.'34 And: 'Judge not, so that you may not be judged. For you shall be judged by the judgment with which you have judged.'35 4. Even apart from the reason that we have mentioned it is dangerous to judge others because, being unaware of the need or the motive out of which they do things offensive to us but either correct or excusable in God's sight, we put ourselves in the position of having judged them rashly; in this we commit no small sin by thinking of our brothers other than we ought."

XXXI. This same old man declared, based on the following indications, that the devil has ever been the promoter of foolish tales and the enemy of spiritual conferences. For when he was talking with some of the brothers about important spiritual matters and noticed that they had fallen into a kind of Lethean slumber and could not cast off the weight of sleep from their eyes, he immediately introduced a foolish tale. When he saw that they woke up at once and pricked up their ears for the pleasure that it gave them, he said with a groan: "Up until now we were speaking about heavenly things, and the eyes of each of you were shut in deathlike repose. But when a foolish tale is introduced all of us wake up and shake off the torpor of the sleep that had mastered us. From this you should consider carefully, then, who was the enemy of that spiritual conference and who is the instigator of this vain and carnal tale. It is perfectly clear that it is the one who rejoices in wickedness and does not cease to foster the latter and to fight against the former."

XXXII. 1. I do not think it less necessary to recount the deed of a brother who was intent upon the purity of his heart and deeply concerned about divine contemplation. When after fifteen years numerous letters had been sent to him from the province of

Pontus by his father and mother and many friends, he took the big bundle of correspondence and, reflecting at length, said to himself: "How many thoughts, which will drive me either to empty joy or to fruitless sadness, will come to me as a result of reading these? 2. For how many days will the recollection of those who wrote them turn the concentration of my heart away from the contemplation that I have set myself? How long will it take for the mental confusion that has been generated by this to be calmed and with what effort will a tranquil condition be regained once my spirit has been shaken by the feelings occasioned by this correspondence and, by recalling the words and faces of those whom it left so long ago, has begun to see them again, to live with them, and to be involved with them in mind and thought? It would be of no use whatsoever to have left them in body if in heart I begin to gaze upon them and to revive and to readmit into myself the memory that everyone who renounces this world has rejected as though he were dead." 3. Reflecting on these things in his heart he decided not only not to open a single letter but not even to unfasten the bundle lest, when going over the names of those who had written and recalling their faces, his spiritual resolve fail. And so he took it, still tied up, and threw it into the fire to be burned, saying: "Away, thoughts of my homeland, and be burned as well; do not try any more to turn me back to the things that I have fled."

XXXIII. We also met Abba Theodore, who was endowed with the greatest holiness and knowledge not only in practical affairs but also in familiarity with Scripture. This he had obtained not from a zeal for reading or from worldly learning but from purity of heart alone, since he could hardly either understand or speak more than a few words of Greek. When he was seeking out the answer to some particularly obscure question he would pray untiringly for seven days and nights until, thanks to a revelation from the Lord, he reached the solution to the question at issue.

XXXIV. When some of the brothers, then, were marveling at the

remarkable clarity of his knowledge and were asking him about certain interpretations of Scripture, he said to them: "A monk who desires to attain to a knowledge of Scripture should never toil over the works of the commentators. Instead he should direct the full effort of his mind and the attentiveness of his heart toward the cleansing of his fleshly vices. As soon as these have been driven out and the veil of the passions has been lifted, the eyes of his heart will naturally contemplate the mysteries of Scripture, since it was not in order to be unknown and obscure that they were delivered to us by the grace of the Holy Spirit; rather they are made obscure by our vices, when the veil of our sinfulness clouds over the eyes of our heart. Once these latter have been restored to their natural healthfulness, the very reading of Holy Scripture—even by itself—will be more than sufficient for the contemplation of true knowledge, and they will not stand in need of the teachings of the commentators, just as fleshly eyes do not need anyone's instructions in order to see so long as they are untouched by inflammation or by the darkness of blindness. Such great differences and errors have arisen among them because many, paying no heed to the cleansing of their minds, have jumped into interpreting them and, devising opinions that are at odds with both the faith and themselves on account of the dullness and impurity of their hearts, have been unable to grasp the light of truth."

XXXV. When this same man came unexpectedly to my cell in the dead of night, covertly and with fatherly curiosity wanting to know what I as a still untrained anchorite was doing by myself, and he had found me just after I had finished the evening service and was on the verge of giving my weary body some rest and lying down on a reed mat, he drew some sighs from the depths of his heart, called me by name, and said: "How many are there, O John, who at this hour are speaking with God and embracing him and holding him to themselves! And you are depriving yourself of this great light by yielding to sluggish repose!"

And since the virtues and grace of the fathers have led us to digress to narratives of this sort, I consider it necessary to recall in this volume the memorable charitable deed that we experienced through the hospitality of the great man Archebius. Thus the purity of abstinence, grafted onto a charitable deed, may shine forth more brightly if it is set against a beautiful and striking background. For the duty of fasting becomes acceptable to God when it is crowned with fruits of charity.

XXXVI. 1. And so, when we came, still very untrained, from the monasteries of Palestine to a town in Egypt called Diolcos and saw there a great throng brought together under the discipline of the cenobium and wonderfully instructed in the best order of monks, which is also the first, we were with keenest desire eager to see as well that which is considered still more excellent— namely, that of the anchorites—since we had been urged on by everyone's praises. For these latter, dwelling first for a long time in cenobia, having been carefully and thoroughly instructed in the rule of patience and discretion, having mastered the virtues of both humility and poverty and having totally destroyed every vice, penetrate the deep recesses of the desert in order to engage in terrible combat with the demons. 2. Discovering, then, that men of this chosen orientation were dwelling near the River Nile in a place that was bound on one side by the same river and on the other by the vast sea, making it an island habitable by none but monks in search of solitude (for the saltiness of the ground and the barrenness of the sand do not fit it for any kind of cultivation)—hastening to them, I say, with the utmost desire, we were extraordinarily struck by their toil, which they undertake for the sake of virtue and out of love for solitude. For they are afflicted with such a scarcity of water that they distribute it with more care and anxiety than the stingiest person would conserve and spare the most precious kind of wine. For they carry it for their needs from the aforesaid river over the course of three miles and even more, because the distance, which is broken up by sandy hills, is doubled by reason of

the intense difficulty of the labor.

XXXVII. Once we had seen these men, then, and a yearning to imitate them had inflamed us, and when the aforementioned Archebius (who was the most virtuous of them) had conducted us to his cell out of hospitality, he became aware of our desire and pretended that he wanted to leave that place and to offer us his cell before departing, declaring that he was going to do this even if we had not been there. Inflamed by the desire to remain there and putting all our faith in the say-so of such a great man, we embraced his offer and accepted his cell along with all its furniture and utensils. And so, having succeeded in his pious deception, he left the place for a few days, during which he obtained the means for constructing a cell. Later, on his return, he built himself another with great effort. Not long after he in turn gave this one, along with all its furnishings, to some brothers who came by and had the same desire to remain there, having deceived them with a similar charitable lie. And he, tirelessly persevering in his deed of charity, built himself a third cell to live in.

XXXVIII. 1. It seems to me worth the effort to recall still another charitable deed of the same man, by which monks from our region may be taught to maintain not only a rigorous abstinence but also a most sincere disposition of love, thanks to the example of this one same man. For, although the scion of a not undistinguished family, from his boyhood on he despised this world and his parents' affection, and he fled to a monastery that was hardly four miles from the aforesaid town. There he lived his entire life in such a way that for fully fifty years he not only never returned to or saw the village that he had left but never so much as looked upon a woman's face, not even his own mother's. Meanwhile his father was overtaken by death, leaving behind a debt of a hundred solidi. Although worry of any kind was utterly foreign to him, inasmuch as he had abandoned all his father's property, he nonetheless became aware that his mother was being greatly worried by her

creditors. 2. And so, out of familial consideration, he relaxed that gospel rigor in keeping with which, when his parents were living in prosperity, he considered that he had neither father nor mother on earth. Now he acknowledged that he had a mother, and he hastened to help her in her distress in such a way as not to mitigate any of his self-imposed strictness. For he stayed within the confines of the monastery and requested that his ordinary work be tripled, and there he toiled both day and night throughout a whole year, by his laborious effort paying the creditors their due and freeing his mother from all pain of worry. Thus he snatched her from the burden of debt without allowing the rigor of his chosen orientation to be diminished because of a familial obligation. He maintained his accustomed strictness in such a way as not to deny his mother an act of piety, and her whom he had formerly despised out of love for Christ he now acknowledged out of piety to him.

XXXIX. 1. When a brother named Symeon, who was very dear to us and who was totally ignorant of the Greek language, arrived from the region of Italy, one of the elders who, under the guise of a kind of transaction, was desirous of performing a charitable deed for him because he was a visitor asked him why he was sitting unoccupied in his cell. By this he was implying that he could not remain in it for any length of time because of both the distractions produced by inactivity and the scarcity of necessary items, being certain that no one could withstand the onslaughts typical of the desert if he were not content to make a living for himself with his own hands. 2. When he replied that he did not know how to and could not do any of the things that were done there by the brothers except copywork, if indeed there was anyone in the region of Egypt who would want to have a Latin codex for his use, the other seized upon this as the occasion whereby he could as it were traffic in a kind deed, under the guise of a deal, and he said: "This opportunity has come from God, for I have been looking for a long time for someone who could copy the Apostle for me in Latin.

I have a brother who is burdened with the obligations of military service and who is very well versed in Latin, and I want to send him something to read from Holy Scripture for his edification." 3. And so Symeon grasped this opportunity with gratitude as having been offered him by God. The old man also gladly embraced the ploy as having given him the possibility of unembarrassedly accomplishing a kind deed, and at once he not only provided him with a full year's pay in the form of everything that he needed to survive but also brought him the parchments and tools that were necessary for writing. Afterwards, when the codex was written, he took it, although it was of no use or help to him (since no one in that region had any knowledge whatsoever of that language) apart from what he had purchased through this ruse and at great expense. And so the one, without any embarrassment or disgrace and thanks to his own effort and labor, received the necessary means of subsistence, and the other accomplished a work of generous kindliness as if he were under obligation, acquiring for himself a greater reward inasmuch as, with considerable delicacy, he had provided the visiting brother not only with the necessities of life but even with both the tools of his trade and the opportunity for working.

XL. 1. But since affection and charitable deeds seem to be mixed in where we had planned to say something about rigorous fasting and abstinence, let us return to our plan and introduce into this little work a remarkable deed of some who were boys in age but not in intelligence. When someone brought some figs (which aroused the greatest wonder inasmuch as they had never been seen before in that place) from Mareotis in Libya to Abba John the bursar in the desert of Skete, who was responsible for finances in that church in the time when blessed Paphnutius the priest had entrusted the task to him, he at once sent them by way of two youths to a certain old man who lived deep in the desert, eighteen miles away from the church, and who was plagued by ill health. 2. When they had taken the fruit and were heading toward the cell of

the aforesaid old man, a very dense fog suddenly appeared and they lost their way, which is something that can very easily happen there even to older men. And when for a whole day and night they had tried every direction in the vast and trackless desert and were utterly unable to find the sick man's cell, they grew weak from both the weariness of the way and hunger and thirst. Kneeling in prayer, they gave up their spirit to the Lord. 3. Later a lengthy search was made, following the trail of their footprints (which in those sandy areas are as deep as they would be in snow) before they were covered up again by the fine sand that would be spread even by a slight breeze. It was discovered that they had kept the figs untouched, just as they had received them. They had chosen to give up the ghost rather than the trust that had been placed in them, and to lose their temporal lives rather than to violate their elder's command.

XLI. We should mention one more salutary mandate, of the blessed Macarius, so that the words of this great man may bring this book on fasting and abstinence to a close. He said that a monk should pay attention to fasting as if he were going to dwell in the body for a hundred years, and that he should restrain the movements of the mind, forget slights, reject sadness, and disdain sorrows and setbacks as if he were going to die daily. For in the former case discretion is beneficial and prudent, since with equable strictness it causes the monk always to advance and does not allow him to fall back from what is difficult to the brink of disaster as a result of bodily weakness. In the latter case, however, magnanimity is salutary, since it is able not only to despise what seems fortunate in the present world but also not to be broken by adversities and sorrows, scorning these things as small and insignificant; it keeps his mind's gaze constantly fixed on where, on a given day and at a given moment, he believes that he must be summoned.

Textual References

1. Is 45:2–3.
2. 1 Cor 4:5.
3. Cf. Ps 66:12.
4. 1 Cor 15:28.
5. 1 Cor 1:30.
6. Eph 4:13, 5.4.3.
7. Ez 16:49.
8. Cf. Gn 19:1–28.
9. Rom 13:14.
10. 2 Tm 2:5.
11. 1 Cor 9:25.
12. 2 Pt 2:19.
13. Jn 8:34.
14. Cf. Dn 3:6.
15. Jn 8:34.
16. 1 Cor 10:13.
17. 1 Cor 9:26–27.
18. Phil 3:13–14.
19. 2 Tm 4:7.
20. Sg 1:3.
21. 2 Tm 4:8a.
22. 2 Tm 4:8b.
23. Jn 14:23.
24. Rv 3:20.
25. Sg 1:3.
26. Ps 63:8.
27. Eph 6:12.
28. Cf. 1 Cor 6:19.
29. Eph 3:16–17.
30. Prv 20:13 LXX.
31. Jb 5:2.
32. Cf. Mt 10:40.

33. Mt 9:15.

34. Rom 14:10,4.

35. Mt 7:1–2.

Notes to the Text

5.1 On Pope Castor cf. praef. 2 and the relevant note.

5.2.2 The earth in which the powerful passions hold sway is the body, as is clear from the context. That the earth may serve as a symbol for the body is adduced in Augustine, *De serm. Dom. in monte* 2.6.23.

5.2.3 The last sentence of this section is a remarkable example, in miniature, of the genre of writing that reached its apogee in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* more than a millennium later.

5.4 The notion that no one individual masters all the virtues, which is the burden of this chapter, is discussed in Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 4.21.130. The same notion is very felicitously expressed in Jerome, *Ep.* 55.5.

5.4.1 The Antony mentioned here is the subject of Athanasius's *V. S. Antonii.*

5.4.1f. On the image of the desert as a place of flowers, cf. *Conlat.* 1.1 and the relevant note.

5.4.2 Although the monk in general is called to be "a most prudent bee" here, Antony is specifically referred to as such in Athanasius, *V. S. Antonii* 3, because of his habit, described ibid. 3f., of seeking out virtuous example from many different persons. Cf. Weber 81–82. On the image of the wisdom of the bee, cf. RAC 2.280.

5.4.2f. On Christ as the summation of the virtues, cf. Origen, *Hom. 2 in Ps.* 38.2; Ambrose, *De fide* 3.7.52.

5.4.3 "The conferences of the elders" may refer to *Conlat.* 18f., but cf. the conclusion of the introduction to *Conlat.* 18.

5.5 That fasting must be adapted to the capabilities of the individual is also stated in *Conlat.* 2.22.1.

5.11.1 All the virtues possess a single nature: I.e., virtue is a unity. The idea can be traced ultimately to Plato, *Protag.* 329 Cff., and in Christian literature it can be found in Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 2.18.80.3.

5.11.2 On the interconnection of the vices, cf. *Conlat.* 5.10 and the introduction to *Conlat.* 5, where the Aristotelian and Stoic sources of this doctrine are mentioned.

The desire for money, which is external and foreign to our constitution: Cf. 7.1ff.; *Conlat.* 5.8 (with the relevant note).

5.12.ff. Athletic imagery runs through these chapters. The monk is very commonly described as an athlete, and this is perhaps the longest such instance in early Christian literature. Cf. also and in particular 8.22, 10.5, 12.32.1, and the note at *Conlat.* 7.20.

5.12.1 The Olympic Games, the most celebrated athletic games of antiquity, were said to have been initiated in 776 B.C. and were usually held at four-year intervals. The Pythian contests, also started in high antiquity, were originally musical and then became athletic as well; they too were held at four-year intervals. Both were suppressed by the end of the fourth century A.D.

The privilege of immunity that a victorious athlete is said to enjoy may refer to a customary exemption from certain

financial obligations. Cf. Daremberg-Saglio 1.1.515.

5.12.1f. On the prerequisites for participating in the Olympic games in particular, which Cassian to some extent reproduces here, cf. Daremberg-Saglio 4.1.181–182.

5.14.2 Nebuchadnezzar is sometimes taken as an image of the devil. Cf. Hippolytus, *Comm. in Dan.* 2.19.3; Jerome, *Ep.* 22.21. The rest of the allegory, however, seems peculiar to Cassian. Cf. also 6.17.

5.15 The image that appears here is very similar to one that is used in *Conlat.* 1.5.1.

5.16.2 Jerome's translation of 1 Cor 10:13, the verse in question, uses the subjunctive "may...seize" (*adpreh endat*) rather than the indicative "seizes" (*adpreh endit*) favored by Cassian and most other fathers.

5.17f. The true—in the sense of prototypical—athlete of Christ is Paul, as the scriptural citations make plain.

5.18.2 Like a lofty victor: *Ut sublimis triumphator.* The image is probably taken from the practice of treating a winner in the games as if he were a military conqueror. Cf. Daremberg-Saglio 4.1.190–191. Such conquerors rode in carriages described as lofty in the triumphs that were organized in their honor. Cf. Pauly-Wissowa, 1e Reihe, 7.1.503.

5.19.1 On the image of the soldier of Christ here and in 5.21.1, cf. the note at 1.1.1.

5.20 The lawful station: *Stationem legitimam.* The term refers here to a set period of fasting on a given day. Cf. Christine Mohrmann, "Statio," *Vigiliae Christianae* 7 (1953): 221–245, and the note to *Conlat.* 2.25.

Similar criteria for the selection of food are set down in Basil, *Reg. fus. tract.* 19.

Eating and sleeping are associated with each other here and in 5.26. That sleep should be touched upon in this context rather than in that of sadness or acedia, the fifth and sixth principal vices, is noteworthy. Cf. also Evagrius, *Prac.* 94.

5.23.1 The three kinds of gluttony are further discussed in *Conlat.* 5.11.1f. Cf. Weber 68–69 on the possible sources for this in Evagrius.

5.23.3 Fasting...should, as far as possible, be hidden and concealed: In *Conlat.* 17.21f. it is even recommended that lying be employed to facilitate concealment of one's fasting.

5.24ff. On the difference in the practice of receiving guests between Syria/Palestine and Egypt, and for Cassian's probable source in Evagrius regarding breaking one's fast for visitors, cf. Weber 74–75. On breaking the fast for visitors cf. also *Conlat.* 21.14.3.

5.24 The fourth and sixth days are mentioned as regular days of fasting as early as *Didache* 8.1.

In the first few lines of the elder's response ("Fasting is ever with me...") there seems to be more than a slight reminiscence of Jn 12:8 ("You have the poor with you always...").

5.26 For churchgoing on Saturday and Sunday, cf. also

3.2 and the relevant note.

5.27 It is uncertain who the elder John may be. It is possible that he is to be identified with Abba John in 5.40.1.

There is a Paesius discussed in Palladius, *Hist. laus.* 14.

Another, the brother of the famous Abba Poemen, appears in *Apophthegmata patrum,* de abbate Poemene 2, 65,173. Whether either of these is the same as the present Paesius cannot be determined.

5.28 Departing...for his own: *Ad propria transmigrantem.* The image of leaving for one's homeland and for familiar places is at play here.

The groan that precedes the old man's final words is formulaic and adds to the seriousness of the moment. Cf. *Conlat.* 2.13.7 and the relevant note.

5.29 This Machetes is otherwise totally unknown.

5.31 Lethean slumber: The reference is to a mythical river of the underworld that produced oblivion in those who drank from it. Cf. Virgil, *Aen.* 6.714f. There is a play on words in the Latin of "Lethean slumber...deathlike repose" *Lethaeo...sopore...letali dormitione.*

5.32.1 Pontus was a region on the southeastern shore of the Black Sea.

5.33 Abba Theodore may be the same person as the one to whom *Conlat.* 6 is dedicated, but there are also reasons for believing that this is not the case. Cf. the introduction to *Conlat.* 6.

5.34 This passage is marked both by the anti-intellectualism so often characteristic of the desert and by the not necessarily anti-intellectual idea that only a pure heart can understand Scripture at its deepest level. On this latter cf. *Conlat.* 14.9.7 and the relevant note; Weber 101. That Scripture is not obscure by design was not the usual view of the matter in Christian antiquity. The more common opinion seems to have been that the obscurity of Scripture was part of the divine

plan, and that it was such in order to exercise the intellects of those who were searching it out. Cf. Origen, *C. Celsum* 3.45; Augustine, *De doct. christ.* 2.6.7. Cassian's view is analogous to that of Gregory Nazianzen, *Or.* 28.11f., who asserts that the obscurity surrounding God is not of divine but of human making. However, the positions represented by Cassian on the one hand and by Origen and Augustine on the other are by no means mutually exclusive since both Origen and Augustine presuppose the purity of heart of which Cassian speaks here.

5.35 The John addressed here is Cassian himself. Only in one other place—namely, *Conlat.* 14.9.4—is he referred to simply as John.

It is possible that when Abba Theodore tells John of the many who are praying "in the dead of night" (*intempesta nocte*) he has in mind the tradition to the effect that around midnight the whole of creation stops its activities to praise God. Cf. Hippolytus, *Trad. apost.* 41.

This Archebius is the same as the one who appears briefly in *Conlat* 7.26.3 and at greater length in *Conlat.* 11.2ff. Cf. the relevant notes.

5.36.1 Diolcos is mentioned in *Conlat.* 18.1.1. Cf. the beginning of the introduction to *Conlat.* 18.

On the language relative to the two orders of monks, cenobitic and anchoritic, cf. the commentary in the introduction to *Conlat.* 18.

5.36.2 On living far from water as an ascetic practice, cf. 4.24.3 and the relevant note.

5.37 The narratives here and in 5.39 are accounts of charitable deceptions of the sort that *Conlat.* 17 would justify.

5.38.1 "The aforesaid town" is Diolcos, mentioned in 5.36.1.

A hundred solidi: The solidus was a gold coin and the debt in question was a considerable one. On the value of the solidus, cf. Pauly-Wissowa, 1e Reihe, 3.1.920–926.

5.38.2 In such a way as not to deny his mother an act of piety: *Ita...ut nequaquam pietatis opus maternis visceribus denegaret.*

5.39.1 This Symeon is otherwise unknown.

5.39.3 On the material involved in producing a codex in antiquity, cf. RAC 2.680–681, 683–684.

5.40.1 This account is somewhat paralleled in *Conlat* 2.6, but the purpose is different. There Cassian is condemning a mortal lack of discretion while here he is praising obedience unto death.

5.40.1 Mareotis in Libya: Mareotis was the region centered on Lake Mareotis, just south of Alexandria and to the east of the Libyan Desert.

Abba John the bursar is otherwise unknown.

Paphnutius the priest is certainly the same as the one who appears in *Conlat.* 3. Cf. the introduction to *Conlat.* 3.

5.40.2 The description of the death of the two brothers, who gave up their spirit to the Lord as they knelt in prayer, recalls the final moments of the martyr Stephen as described in Acts 7:59–60. It is possible that Cassian is suggesting here that the boys had not merely died for the sake of obedience but were martyrs for it.

5.41 The Macarius who is mentioned here cannot be identified with certainty; there were many of that name in the desert. For the Evagrian source of Macarius's advice, cf. Weber 64–65.

SIXTH BOOK: THE SPIRIT OF FORNICATION

Chapters

I. The twofold struggle against the spirit of fornication.

II. The principal corrective to the spirit of fornication.

III. How much of a remedy solitude is, along with abstinence, in overcoming the vice of fornication.

IV. What the difference is between abstinence and chastity, and whether both always exist together.

V. That onslaughts of fornication cannot be overcome by human effort alone.

VI. The particular grace of God with respect to the task of chastity.

VII. An example of worldly struggle according to the words of the Apostle.

VIII. A comparison of the purity of those who are about to engage in an earthly contest and struggle.

IX. What great purity of heart we should always seek to achieve in the eyes of God.

X. What the sign is of perfect and integral purity.

XI. From what vice nocturnal illusions proceed.

XII. That purity of flesh cannot be acquired without cleanness of heart.

XIII. What the first custodian of fleshly cleansing is.

XIV. That we should not strive to elaborate the praise of chastity but rather to lay out its effects.

XV. That the virtue of chastity is specially designated by the Apostle as holiness.

XVI. Another testimony of the Apostle concerning the holiness

of chastity.

XVII. That the hope of a higher reward should increase one's concern for chastity.

XVIII. That, just as chastity cannot be acquired without humility, so neither can knowledge without chastity.

XIX. Some words of the holy Bishop Basil on the nature of his virginity.

XX. What the end is of true integrity and purity.

XXI. How we can maintain the state of perfect purity.

XXII. To what point the integrity of our body may be brought, and what the indication is of a mind totally purified.

XXIII. The helps by which the purity of our heart and of our body may remain perfect.

I. Our second struggle, according to the tradition of the fathers, is against the spirit of fornication. This savage war is longer than the others and of greater duration, and it is completely won by only a few because, although it begins its battles against humankind from the first onset of puberty, it is not terminated until the other vices have been overcome. For twofold is the attack that rises in aggression, armed with a doubled viciousness. And therefore it must be resisted by a doubled force since, inasmuch as it gains in strength by the weakness of both body and soul, it cannot be overcome except by struggling on these two fronts. For bodily fasting alone is not sufficient to procure and possess the purity of perfect chastity unless it is preceded by a contrite spirit and by persevering prayer against this most unclean spirit; then there must be constant meditation on Scripture, and to this should be added spiritual knowledge, as well as toilsome manual labor, which restrains and recalls the feckless wanderings of the heart; and before all else there must have been laid a foundation of true humility, without which there can never be a victory over any vice.

II. For the corrective to this vice comes principally from the perfection of the heart; it is there, according to the Lord's words, that the poison of this malady is produced. "From the heart," he says, "come forth evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness,"[1] and so forth. This, then, is the first thing to be rectified, whence the spring of life and of death is known to begin flowing, as Solomon says: "Guard your heart with all care, for there are the wellsprings of life."[2] For the flesh is attendant upon its will and command. Hence the frugality of fasting must be practiced with very great zeal lest, if the flesh be filled with an excess of food, it be found at odds with the salutary precepts of the soul and insolently reject the governance of its own spirit. But if we place all our emphasis on the discipline of the body alone and the soul has not, in similar fashion, fasted from other vices and been occupied with divine meditation and spiritual pursuits, we shall never be able to mount to that most lofty height of true integrity, since that which is most important in us is hindering our body's purity. It behooves us, then, to clean first, in the Lord's words, "the inside of the cup and the dish so that the outside may become clean as well."[3]

III. The other vices are usually purged away by contact with and by the daily discipline of human beings, and to a certain extent they are cured by disgust at the lapse itself. For example, the maladies of anger, sadness, and impatience are healed by a meditative heart and by constant watchfulness but also by involvement with the brothers and by their continual challenges, and when they are frequently shown to be active and are often rebuked they quite speedily find their way to health. But this disease requires solitude and distance, along with affliction of body and contrition of heart, so that, once the dangerous fever of seething emotions has passed, a state of integral health may be acquired. For just as it is often beneficial for those who are suffering from a particular illness not even to see harmful foods lest they conceive a deadly desire from the sight of them, so stillness and solitude are

particularly helpful in driving out this disease. Thus a sickly mind, no longer besieged by different images and on its way to a purer contemplative vision, will more easily be able to pull out the noxious shoot of desire by its roots.

IV. 1. Yet no one should think from this that we are denying that there are also those who are abstinent in communities of the brothers. That this is the case we freely confess. For it is one thing to be abstinent—that is, ἐγκράτη—and another to be chaste and, to put it in this way, to pass over to a disposition of integrity and incorruption, which is called ἁγνόν. This is a virtue that is bestowed in a very special manner only on those who remain virgins in both flesh and mind, as both Johns are known to have been in the New Testament, and also Elijah, Jeremiah, and Daniel in the Old. Not unjustifiably will they also be numbered among those who, after having experienced corruption, have attained to a similar degree of purity through lengthy toil and effort and by way of integrity of mind and body, and who do not feel the stings of the flesh in the form of an onslaught of base desire but only in the form of a movement of nature.

2. We say that this state can be attained with great difficulty by the multitude. But whether it is impossible is for each individual to know, based not on our assertion but on a thorough examination of his own conscience. We, however, do not doubt that there are many who are abstinent and who extinguish and suppress the attacks of the flesh, which they endure either infrequently or every day, out of fear of hell and desire for the kingdom of heaven. These persons, the elders declare, are able not to be completely overwhelmed by the impulses of vice, but they also assert that they cannot ever be safe and invulnerable. For it is inevitable that, if a person is engaged in battle, he himself will sometimes be shaken even though he often conquers and overcomes the enemy.

V. Hence, if it is in our heart to undertake the spiritual struggle lawfully along with the Apostle,[4] we should strive with all our

mind's energy to overcome this most unclean spirit, trusting not in our own strength (for human effort is unable to accomplish this) but in the Lord's help. For the soul cannot escape being attacked by this vice until it realizes that waging this war is beyond its own powers and that it cannot obtain the victory by its own toil and effort, without the assistance and protection of the Lord.

VI. In truth, although grace and victory are the Lord's in all those who progress in virtue and in the conquest of every vice, it is abundantly clear, from both the words of the fathers and the experience of purification itself, that there is a special favor and gift of God accorded to those who have deserved to gain it. For this is, to a certain degree, a departure from the flesh for one who is dwelling in the body, and it is beyond nature for one who is encompassed by fragile flesh not to feel the stings of the flesh. And therefore it is impossible for a person, so to say, to fly by his own wings to such a lofty and heavenly prize if the Lord's grace has not brought him, thanks to the gift of chastity, out of the earthly mire. For by no virtue do fleshly human beings so nearly approximate and imitate the way of life of the angelic spirits as by the deserts and grace of chastity, whereby those who are still living on earth have, according to the Apostle, "their citizenship in the heavens"[5] and possess here in their frail flesh what it is promised that the holy ones will have in the world to come once they have laid aside their fleshly corruption.[6]

VII. 1. Listen to what the Apostle has to say: "Everyone who fights in the games abstains from everything."[7] Let us consider what he meant by "everything" so that we can gain instruction about the spiritual contest by comparing it with the fleshly one. For those who strive to fight lawfully in the visible contest do not have the freedom to use all the foods that their desire for pleasure suggests but only those that the discipline of the games permits. And they must abstain not only from forbidden foods, drunkenness, and every kind of intoxication but also from all lazi-

ness, idleness, and slothfulness, in order that their strength may grow from daily exercises and constant meditation. 2. Thus they are removed from all worry and sadness and from worldly affairs, as well as from conjugal feelings and activity, so that they may be aware of nothing other than the practice of their discipline and be utterly uninvolved in any sort of mundane concern, hoping only to obtain from him who presides over the games their daily portion of food, the glory of a crown, and worthy prizes as a reward for their victory. To such an extent do they keep themselves pure from all the contamination of sexual intercourse that, when they are getting ready to contend in the games, they cover their loins with lead sheets lest perchance they be deceived by nocturnal fancies in their dreams and diminish the strength that they have acquired over a long period; the inflexibility of the metal, when applied to the genitals, is able to inhibit the shameful liquid. They know that they will certainly be overcome and be unable to pursue the contest in question if their strength has been reduced and if a misleading and harmful pleasurable image has ruined the firm chastity that they have provided for.

VIII. And so, if we have grasped the discipline of this world's games, which the blessed Apostle used as a model when he wished to instruct us, teaching us how much strictness was involved in it, how much diligence and how much care, what ought *we* to do, with what purity does it behoove *us* to watch over the chastity of our body and soul, when we must daily eat the flesh of the all-holy Lamb, which even the commands of the old law permit no one who is unclean to touch! For in Leviticus it is thus commanded: "Everyone who is clean shall eat flesh, but whatever soul in which there is uncleanness eats of the flesh of the saving sacrifice, which is the Lord's, shall perish before the Lord."[8] How great, then, is the gift of integrity, without which even those who were under the Old Testament could not engage in the typical sacrifices and those who desire to strive for this world's corruptible crown cannot be crowned!

IX. And so, first of all, the hidden places of our heart must be very carefully purified. For what those others wish to acquire in terms of purity of body, we must ourselves possess in the depths of our conscience. It is there that the Lord sits as arbiter and overseer and constantly observes the progress and struggle of our contest. Thus we shall not, by careless thoughts, permit to take root within us what we shudder to allow in the open, and we shall not be contaminated by a hidden acquiescence in matters that shame us when they are publicly known. Although they could escape the notice of human beings, nonetheless they cannot be concealed from the knowledge of the holy angels and of almighty God himself, in regard to which there are no secrets.

X. It will be a clear sign and a full proof of this purity if either no unlawful image occurs to us as we lie at rest and relaxed in slumber or at least, when one does surface, it does not arouse any movements of desire. For although a disturbance of this kind may not be accounted as fully evil and sinful, it is nonetheless the sign of an as yet imperfect mind and an indication of vice that has not been totally purified when this sort of delusion comes about by way of deceiving images.

XI. For the character of our thoughts, which is rather negligently paid heed to in the midst of the day's distractions, is made trial of in the calm of night. Consequently, when some delusion of this sort occurs, guilt must not be imputed to sleep. This is, rather, the result of past negligence and the manifestation of a disease hidden within. The night was not the first to give it birth, but the relaxation of sleep brought it forth to the surface from the hidden depths of the soul. It reveals the hidden fevers of seething emotion, which we contract when we have been fed the whole day through with harmful thoughts. In this respect it is like bodily ill health, which does not usually occur at the moment when it seems to make its appearance but which is contracted as the result of past negligence, when someone has foolishly eaten unhealthful

food and has placed himself in contact with evil and deadly humors.

XII. On this account God, the Creator and Author of the human race, being better acquainted than anyone else with the nature of his own handiwork and with how it could be corrected, applied the remedy to the spot where he knew that the causes for the malady were produced in the first place, when he said: "Whoever looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart."[9] On observing our wanton eyes he blamed not them so much as that inner sense which makes bad use of them to see. For the heart that sees in order to lust is feeble and wounded by the dart of pleasure. By its own viciousness it diverts the gift of sight rightly bestowed on it by the Creator to the working of wicked deeds and takes advantage of vision to produce in itself the hidden disease of desire. Hence this salutary command is enjoined on the person whose viciousness gives rise, under the pretext of a look, to the worst of maladies. For it is not said: "Guard your eyes with all care." It would surely have been necessary to keep special watch over them if the disposition of lust arose from them. But in fact the eyes do nothing more than offer the soul the simple possibility of seeing, and so it is said: "Guard your heart with all care." Thus medicine is applied chiefly to the spot where the misuse of the eyes' function certainly occurs.

XIII. 1. This, then, will be the first means of promoting this purification—that, when the recollection of the female sex steals into our mind by the devil's subtle and clever insinuation, through the remembrance, first of all, of our own mother, our sisters, or our relatives, and even of holy women, we must at once hasten to cast it out from within us. Otherwise, if we tarry over it for any length of time, the one who seduces us into evil deeds, having once seized upon the occasion of sex, will subtly move the mind and cause it to sink down to those persons by whom he can plant wicked thoughts. Hence we must ever be mindful of that precept:

"Guard your heart with all care." And, in accord with God's first commandment, we must keep a careful lookout for the serpent's harmful head[10]—namely, the beginnings of evil thoughts, by which the devil attempts to creep into our soul; nor should we, through heedlessness, allow into our heart the rest of his body—namely, an assent to pleasure that, if it is let in, will undoubtedly kill our now captive mind with a poisonous bite. 2. It behooves us as well to destroy the sinners in our land—namely, our fleshly feelings—on the morning of their birth,[11] as they emerge, and, while they are still young, to dash the children of Babylon against the rock.[12] Unless they are killed at a very tender age they will, with our acquiescence, rise up to our harm as stronger adults, and they will certainly not be overcome without great pain and effort. For as long as the man who is strong and armed—that is, our spirit — keeps watch over his house and secures the depths of his heart by the fear of God, all his property will be safe—namely, the profits of his labor and the virtues that he has acquired over a long period. But if someone who is stronger comes upon him and overcomes him—namely, the devil, through the assent of our thoughts —he will take away the arms in which he trusted—namely, the recollection of Scripture and the fear of God—and he will divide his spoils, which means that he will disperse the deserts of his virtues by the contrary vices, whatever they may be.[13]

XIV. And, passing over everything that has been put into Holy Scripture in praise of this virtue (for it is not my purpose to elaborate the praise of chastity but, following the traditions of the fathers, to explain its character, how it is to be acquired and maintained, and what its end is), I shall mention only one phrase of the blessed Apostle, from which it will be clear how, when he was writing to the Thessalonians, he preferred it to every other virtue, commending it in words of great nobility.

XV. 1. "This is," he says, "the will of God, your sanctification."[14] And lest perchance we be in doubt about or find obscure what he

means by sanctification, whether it be righteousness or love or humility or patience (for sanctification is believed to be acquired in all these virtues), he says and clearly indicates what he really means by sanctification: "This is the will of God, your sanctification—that you abstain," he says, "from fornication, that each of you know how to possess his vessel in honor and sanctification, not in the passion of lust, as do the pagans who are ignorant of God."15 See what praises he bestows on it, referring to it as the honor of the vessel—that is, our body—and as sanctification. Hence, on the other hand, the person who is in the passion of lust stands in shamefulness and impurity and is a stranger to sanctification. 2. In a third place, shortly thereafter, he refers to it again as holiness and says: "God has not called us to shamefulness but to holiness. And so the one who spurns this spurns not man but God, who has also given us his Holy Spirit."16 He joins an inviolable authority to this precept of his when he says: "The one who spurns this" (that is, what I said about holiness) "spurns not man" (meaning me who command this) "but God, who speaks in me,"17 who has also designated our heart as a dwelling for his Holy Spirit.18

You see with what simple and pure words and with what great commendations and praises he extols it. First he attributes sanctification to this virtue in particular; then he declares that, by it, the vessel of our body must be freed from uncleanness, and that, third, once shamefulness and reproachful behavior have been cast aside, it will abide in honor and sanctification; finally he points out that in this way the Holy Spirit will dwell in our heart, which is the highest and perfect reward and the recompense of blessedness.

XVI. Although this book is drawing to a close, I shall mention something else in addition to the foregoing testimony of the same Apostle, which is similar to it. When writing to the Hebrews he says: "Pursue peace with everyone, as well as holiness, without which no one will see God."19 Here too he clearly declares that without holiness, which usually refers to integrity of mind and

purity of body, God cannot be seen at all. And all the more is this so inasmuch as he adds here, in explanation of his intent: "Lest anyone be a fornicator or profane like Esau."[20]

XVII. And, to the degree that the reward of chastity is lofty and heavenly, it is assailed by ambushes of adversaries that are all the more serious. Therefore it is to our advantage to cling not only to bodily abstinence but also, with frequent groans and prayers, to a contrite heart. It is thus that the furnace of our flesh, which the Babylonian king does not cease to heat up with the impulses of carnal suggestions, will be extinguished when the dew of the Holy Spirit descends into our hearts.[21]

XVIII. For, as the elders say that this cannot be grasped unless a foundation of humility has first been laid in our heart, so also do they declare that we cannot attain to the source of true knowledge as long as the root of the vice in question occupies the depths of our soul. Indeed, it is possible to find integrity without the grace of knowledge, but it is impossible to possess spiritual knowledge without integral chastity, because there are different gifts and because there is not one grace of the Holy Spirit that is given to everyone, but rather that which each person is worthy and capable of, thanks to his own effort and toil. Although the virtue of integrity is believed to have been perfect in all the holy apostles, nonetheless the gift of knowledge was superabundant in Paul, because he made himself capable of it by his intelligent effort and toil.

XIX. Some strong words of Saint Basil, the bishop of Caesarea, are apropos. He said: "I do not know woman, but I am not a virgin." Well indeed did he understand that the incorruption of the flesh consists not so much in abstaining from woman as it does in integrity of heart, which ever and truly preserves the incorrupt holiness of the body by both the fear of God and the love of chastity.

XX. And so this is the end of integrity and its perfect proof—if,

as we are sleeping, no pleasurable titillation creeps up on us, and, while we are unconscious, there is no filthy product of nature's requirements. Just as it is beyond nature to remove this completely and to cut if off permanently, so it is a matter of the highest virtue to limit it to the unavoidable and very rare requirements of nature, which customarily strike the monk once very two months. Let it be understood, however, that this is in conformity with our own experience and not with the view of the elders, by whom even the aforementioned intervals were considered very short. Otherwise, if we chose to set forth what we received from them, those who, by reason of their negligence or their want of zeal, had less experience of this purity would probably believe that we were describing something incredible or impossible.

XXI. We shall be able to maintain this state constantly and never exceed the manner and time set by nature, which was discussed above, if we think of God as the overseer of and as aware of not only our hidden deeds but also all our thoughts, both of the day and of the night, and if we believe that we are accountable to him for everything that goes on in our hearts, just as we are for our deeds and acts.

XXII. This is incumbent upon us, then, and we must fight against the movements of the soul and the impulses of the flesh until the condition of the flesh submits to the requirements of nature and does not arouse pleasure, expelling excess matter without any harmful wantonness and not doing battle with chastity. But the mind should know that it has not yet arrived at the integral and unalloyed perfection of chastity as long as, when it sleeps, it is deceived by imaginary sights.

XXIII. Hence, in order that these illusions may not creep up on us as we sleep, we must constantly maintain a moderate and regular fast. For whoever exceeds the measure of strictness will inevitably exceed the measure of relaxation as well. When a person is caught in the grip of this immoderation he will certainly fall

away from the very balanced state of tranquillity, and at one time he will be in want from too great an emptiness, while at another he will be swelled up with an abundance of food. For with a change in our eating habits there is inevitably a change in the nature of our purity as well.

Then we must hold constantly to a humble and patient heart and be attentive and careful during the day with respect to anger and other passions. For where the poison of wrath makes an inroad the fire of lasciviousness will certainly penetrate too. But above all a watchful concern is necessary at night. For just as purity and carefulness during the day prepare the way for nocturnal chastity, so nocturnal watchfulness establishes a strong and secure condition for the heart and for its daytime observances.

Textual References

1. Mt 15:19.
2. Prv 4:23 LXX.
3. Mt 23:36.
4. Cf. 2 Tm 4:7.
5. Phil 3:20.
6. Cf. Mt 22:30.
7. 1 Cor 9:25.
8. Lv 7:19–20 LXX.
9. Mt 5:28.
10. Cf. Gn 3:15.
11. Cf. Ps 101:8.
12. Cf. Ps 137:9.
13. Cf. Lk 11:21–22.
14. 1 Thes 4:3.
15. 1 Thes 4:3–5.
16. 1 Thes 4:7–8.
17. 2 Cor 13:3.
18. Cf. Eph 2:22.

19. Heb 12:14.

20. Heb 12:16.

21. Cf. Dn 3.

Notes to the Text

6.3 On fleeing from fornication rather than seeking to understand it, cf. *Apophthegmata patrum,* de abbate Poemene 154.

6.4.1 On the difference between abstinence and chastity, cf. also *Conlat.* 12.10f.

The Johns referred to here are John the Baptist and John the Evangelist. Their virginity was universally accepted in the Christian tradition. Cf. Ps.Clement, *Ep. de virg.* 1.6. That of Elijah was also taken for granted. Cf. the note to 1.1.2. The virginity of Jeremiah was based on Jer 16:2 and is mentioned in Jerome, *Ep.* 22.21; *C. Iovinianum* 1.33. In *C. Iovinianum* 1.25 it is asserted that Daniel too was a virgin, or at least a eunuch.

6.6 The comparison of the chaste life with that of the angels is a commonplace, probably founded on Mt 22:30. Cf. Ps.-Clement, *Ep. de virg.* 1.4; Ambrose, *De virginibus* 1.3.11; Augustine, *De s. virg.* 12.

6.7.2 On athletes abstaining from sexual intercourse in the ancient world, cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 3.6.50; Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York, 1988), 19. Pliny, *Hist. nat.* 34.50.166, says that the custom of applying lead sheets to the loins is derived from lead's chilly nature, which is able to restrain sexual passion and to prevent the sort of dreams that cause spontaneous emissions.

6.8 We must daily eat the flesh of the all-holy Lamb: On the daily

reception of communion to which this refers (which does not imply a daily liturgy), cf. *Conlat.* 7.30.2 and the relevant note.

"The typical sacrifices" of the Old Testament are those that were types or images of the eucharist.

6.9 On Christ as arbiter and overseer, cf. *Conlat.* 7.20.2 and the relevant note.

6.10f. Cassian insists here that even spontaneous and involuntary genital movement is in fact the indicator of some residual impurity in the soul. Cf. the introduction to *Conlat.* 12.

6.13.1 That even one's own mother and one's other female relatives could be a source of sexual temptation to the ascetic is not unheard of in ancient Christian literature. Cf. Lucien Regnault, ed., *Les s entences des Pères du désert: Série des anonymes* (Solesmes, 1985), 60, N 159; ibid. 271–272, K fo 187.

Serpent's...to creep: *Serpentis...serpere* .

6.13.2 A similar treatment of Ps 137:9 may be found in Augustine, Enarr. in Ps. 136.21.

6.15.1 The vessel—that is, our body: Cassian opts to interpret the "vessel" of 1 Thes 4:4 as "body" rather than as "wife" or as "male sexual organ," which are other possibilities. Cf. Raymond F. Collins, *Studies on the First Letter to the Thessalonians* (Leuven, 1984), 311–319, 326–335.

6.15.2f. Holiness: *Sanctimonia.*

6.17 For the image of the Babylonian king and the furnace of the f lesh, cf. also 5.14.2 and the relevant note.

6.18 The spiritual knowledge that is at issue here seems to be the knowledge of the deeper meaning of Scripture that is discussed at length in *Conlat.* 14.

6.19 On Basil, cf. the note at praef. 5. Basil's words on not knowing woman but not being a virgin are otherwise unrecorded.

6.20ff. "The end of integrity and its perfect proof," such as it is discussed here, is also spoken of in *Conlat.* 12.7.6ff.

6.23 Avoidance of extremes both in fasting and in relaxation from fasting is also the subject of *Conlat.* 2.16ff.

SEVENTH BOOK: THE SPIRIT OF AVARICE

Chapters

I. That avarice's attacks are from without and that it is not something natural to the human person as are the other vices.

II. How harmful the disease of avarice is.

III. What benefit there is for us in the natural vices.

IV. That we may say that some vices are natural to us without insulting the Creator.

V. On the vices that are contracted by our own viciousness and without any natural movement.

VI. How difficult it is to expel the disease of avarice once it has been contracted.

VII. By what initial steps avarice is generated, and how many evils it procreates.

VIII. That avarice stands in the way of every virtue.

IX. That a monk who has money cannot remain in the cenobium.

X. What efforts a deserter from the monastery undertakes on account of avarice, when previously he used to complain about the slightest toil.

XI. That the companionship of women is necessary for the sake of protecting one's money.

XII. The example of a certain lukewarm monk who was caught in the trap of avarice.

XIII. What the elders bring to the younger men with respect to the stripping away of the vices.

XIV. By what examples the disease of avarice is shown to be threefold.

XV. How a person who makes a bad renunciation differs from

one who makes no renunciation.

XVI. What people who do not want to deprive themselves of their property say in their own defense.

XVII. The renunciation of the apostles and of the primitive Church.

XVIII. That, if we wish to imitate the apostles, we must not live by our own opinions but follow their example.

XIX. Some words of the holy bishop Basil directed against Syncletius.

XX. How shameful it is to be overcome by avarice.

XXI. How avarice must be overcome.

XXII. How even someone who has no money may be considered avaricious.

XXIII. The example of Judas.

XXIV. That avarice cannot be conquered without poverty.

XXV. On the death of Ananias, Sapphira, and Judas, which they suffered on account of avarice.

XXVI. That avarice brings spiritual leprosy upon the soul.

XXVII. The witness of Scripture, whereby the one who desires perfection is taught not to take up again what he has renounced and disowned.

XXVIII. That no victory can be won against avarice except by poverty.

XXIX. How poverty can be preserved by a monk.

XXX. The remedies for the disease of avarice.

XXXI. That a person cannot conquer avarice if he does not stay in the cenobium, and how he can remain there.

I. Our third conflict is with avarice, which we can call the love of money. Its attacks are from without and not natural, and it does not have its source in the monk other than in the weakness of a

corrupt and sluggish mind, often with the beginnings of renunciation poorly grasped and a lukewarm love of God laid as a foundation. The other incitements to vice seem to be part of human nature and to have their sources as it were inborn in us. They are, so to speak, deeply rooted in the flesh, are present almost at the moment of a person's birth, and precede the ability to distinguish between good and evil. Although they are the first to seize upon a person, they are conquered only after long effort.

II. But this disease arrives later and comes upon the soul from without. As easily as it can be watched out for and rejected, it becomes that much more dangerous than all the others and is that much more difficult to get rid of once there has been neglect and it has been let into the heart. For it turns into "the root of all evils,"[1] sprouting the shoots of many vices.

III. 1. For example, do we not see simple movements of the flesh not only in boys, in whom innocence still precedes the ability to distinguish between good and evil, but even in small children and infants? Although, to be sure, they do not have the beginnings of any wantonness in them, they demonstrate that they have movements of the flesh by a natural incitement. Do we not likewise notice that the savage stings of anger are already flourishing in small children, and before they are aware of the virtue of patience do we not see that they are upset by slights and that they feel it when they are the butt of abusive words, even in the form of jokes? And sometimes, although they lack strength, there is nonetheless no lack of a vengeful will, thanks to anger's impulse.

2. I do not say this in order to declare their natural condition guilty but in order to point out that some of these movements, which proceed from us, have been placed in us for our benefit, while others have been introduced from without and are the product of the vice of negligence and of the decision of an evil will. For the fleshly movements that we referred to previously have been placed in our body by the Creator's providence for a good

purpose. They are there for the renewal of the race and for raising up progeny for posterity, not for perpetuating the disgraces of debauchery and adultery, which are condemned even by the authority of law. 3. Do we not understand that the stings of anger have also been given to us for a very good reason, so that we might be displeased with our vices and errors and occupy ourselves instead with virtue and spiritual pursuits by being most loving to God and patient to our brothers? We know how great, too, is the value of sadness, which is numbered among the rest of the vices, when it has been transformed to a contrary disposition. For when it is in accordance with the fear of God it is very necessary, and when it is in accordance with the world it is extremely harmful, as the Apostle teaches when he says: "The sadness that is in accordance with God works repentance unto a lasting salvation, but the world's sadness works death."2

IV. If, then, we say that these movements were placed in us by the Creator, he will not therefore be accounted guilty if we have chosen to abuse them in wicked fashion and to twist them, instead, to harmful deeds; if we have let ourselves be saddened over barren and worldly gain rather than for the sake of a salutary repentance and the correction of our vices; and if, all the more, we are angered not beneficially with ourselves but, contrary to the Lord's prohibition, with our brothers. If someone wishes to turn iron, which was designed for a necessary and useful purpose, to the murder of the innocent, it will not therefore reflect ill on the Creator of the material if what one person finds appropriate and necessary for living rightly another person makes use of for murder.

V. Certain vices, however, we say take shape without any antecedent natural impulse but by the decision of a corrupt and evil will alone, as is the case with envy and also with avarice itself. Inasmuch as these do not have their source in a natural movement within us, they are contracted from without. But as easy as these

are to watch out for and as convenient as they are to reject, once the mind has been occupied and possessed by them they make it wretched, and they let it attain the means of health only with difficulty—either because those who have been wounded by what they could have disregarded or avoided or very easily overcome do not deserve to be healed with a swift remedy, or at least because, having laid a poor foundation, they are unworthy to raise up the structure of the virtues and the summit of perfection.

VI. Hence this disease should not appear insignificant and contemptible to anyone. Just as it can very easily be rejected, so, if it possesses anyone, it lets him attain the means of health only with difficulty. For it is a catchall of the vices and the root of all evils, and it becomes the shoot of an inextricable wickedness. As the Apostle says: "Avarice"—that is, the love of money—"is the root of all evils."

VII. 1. Once this, then, has possessed a monk's lax and lukewarm mind, it begins by making him concerned about a very small sum and sets out for him certain justifiable and, so to speak, reasonable grounds for holding money back and keeping it for himself. For he complains that what is supplied in the monastery is inadequate and can hardly sustain a healthy and robust body. What if he were struck with bad health and there were nothing special set aside for curing his illness? The monastery's allowance is meager, and there is gross neglect of the sick. 2. If there were nothing of his own with which to regain his bodily health he would surely die a wretched death. Even the very clothing that is supplied is inadequate, and it is up to him to find out where he can get something else to wear. Finally, he cannot stay long in the same place as the monastery, and unless he provides himself with the wherewithal for traveling and the price of a voyage across the sea he will be unable to depart when he wants to. Hemmed in by need and penury, he will endure an existence ever toilsome and wretched, without making any progress, and, always poor and in want, he will have to make do

with other people's property while putting up with their taunts.

3. And so, when his mind has been entrapped in thoughts of this kind, he ponders how he can get hold of at least one denarius. Then he looks anxiously for work that he can do on his own, unbeknownst to his abba. This he sells in secret and, when he has eventually made the money that he wanted, he is all the more fiercely and vehemently tortured with how to double it, and he is uncertain as to where to put it or to whom to entrust it. Then he is distracted with the still more serious concern of what to buy with it and by what kind of business he can double it. And when this too has turned out for him according to plan, his greediness for gold is sharpened, growing more vehement as more money piles up, for when money increases the frenzy of covetousness intensifies.

4. Then he has forebodings of a long life, a feeble old age, and different and long-drawn-out infirmities that, if not provided for by quite a large sum when he is young, will not be able to be endured when he is old. And so the unhappy soul is agitated and tied up in serpentine entanglements as he seeks to increase a wickedly accumulated means of subsistence by a concern that is still more harmful, generating in himself the very malady by which he may be yet more fearfully infected. All his thoughts are preoccupied with gain, and with his heart's gaze he searches out nothing else than where he can get hold of money so that he will be able to flee from the discipline of the monastery as soon as he can. His faith disappears whenever there glitters some hope of gain. 5. For its sake he does not shudder to commit a crime of lying or perjury or theft, nor to break faith, nor to be filled with the guilty fury of wrath. If to any degree the hope of profit slips his grasp, he does not fear to go beyond the limits set by honesty and humility. And so it turns out that, just as other people's belly is their God,[3] in his case it is always gold and the hope of gain. Hence the blessed Apostle, seeing the poisonous harmfulness of this disease, declares that it is not only the root of all evils but also a

slavery to idols when he says: “Avarice” (which is called φιλαργυρια in Greek), “which is slavery to idols.”4 6. You see, then, how ruinous this madness becomes as it increases step by step, so that by the Apostle’s words it is even declared to be a slavery to idols and effigies because, bypassing the form of God and his image, which one who serves God devoutly should maintain unsullied in himself, it prefers to love and look upon human figures cast in gold instead of God.

VIII. Progressing in evil, then, by such stages, he is no longer content to hold on to even a shadow of the virtue of humility or love or obedience. He gets angry at everything and complains and sighs about every activity. Like an unbroken horse, he no longer behaves with respect, and unbridled he rushes to the precipice. Not content with his daily sustenance or with his usual clothing, he announces that he cannot put up with them any longer, and he says that God is not there alone and that his salvation does not depend exclusively on that place. Hence he laments deeply that if he does not quickly betake himself elsewhere he will perish on the spot.

IX. 1. And so, possessing the wherewithal for his wandering in the form of cash, as if he had made wings for himself with its help, he is now ready to leave, and he reacts insolently to all commands. Behaving like a stranger and a foreigner, he ignores and disdains whatever he sees in need of correction. 2. Although he secretly possesses a hidden store of money, he complains that he does not have footwear and clothing, and he is annoyed when they are given to him too slowly. And if perchance, at an elder’s direction, any of this is given first to someone who is known to have nothing whatsoever, he is all the more goaded to burning anger, and he thinks that he is being despised like a foreigner. Not content to set his hands to any kind of work, he finds fault with everything that the well-being of the monastery demands must be done. He keeps careful watch for occasions that will surely offend and anger him,

lest he seem moved to leave the discipline of the cenobium for an insignificant reason. 3. Not content with going away by himself (lest it be believed, so to say, that he was catering to his own vices), he is constantly perverting as many people as he can with secret mutterings. But if harsh weather blocks his departure by land or by sea, he remains there the whole time with a tense and anxious heart, always sowing and arousing discord in the belief that the justification for his departure and the excuse for his lack of seriousness lie nowhere else than in the bad reputation and faults of the monastery.

X. And so he is agitated and more and more inflamed by the firebrands of his own money, which, once possessed, never allows a monk to stay in the monastery or to live under the discipline of a rule. And when it has separated him from the flock of the congregation, as if he were a kind of wild beast, the brute is deprived of his companions and becomes a ready prey; in the absence of his fellows he can be easily devoured. Now he who used to despise carrying out the slightest tasks in the monastery is obliged to labor incessantly, day and night, in the hope of gain. This does not allow him to observe the services of prayer or the measure of the fast or the rule of vigils, nor does it permit him to fulfill the duty of virtuous intercession, as long as he can cater to his raging avarice and meet his daily needs, stoking the fire of covetousness that he believes will be extinguished the more he acquires.

XI. From here there are some who have slipped over the steep precipice and are being carried along by their irrevocable downfall to their death. Not content to possess by themselves money that they had never had before and that they have saved up from an evil start, they seek out the companionship of women whose responsibility it will be to keep watch over what has been wickedly accumulated and kept. In such harmful and dangerous activities do they engage that they are cast down to the very depths of hell, all the while refusing to pay heed to the Apostle's words to the effect

that "having food and clothing, let them be satisfied"[5] with what the frugality of the monastery provides. Instead, "wishing to get rich, they fall into temptation and the snares of the devil and into many useless and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the root of all evils is covetousness"—that is, avarice—"and some who seek it have strayed from the faith and have brought upon themselves many sorrows."[6]

XII. I know of someone who claims that he is a monk and, what is worse, flatters himself on his perfection. When he was received into the cenobium and was warned by his abba that he should not think about what he had renounced and given up and that he should free himself from avarice, the root of all evils, and from earthly snares; and that, if he wished to be cleansed of his former passions, which seemed to press heavily upon him at every moment, he should cease to aspire to things that in fact he had never possessed before; and that, if he were chained down by them, he would certainly never be able to attain to the cleansing of his vices, he did not hesitate to respond to him with truculent mien: "If you have the wherewithal to meet the needs of others, why do you forbid me to have the same?"

XIII. Let this not strike anyone as superfluous or irksome. For unless the different kinds of wounds have been explained and the origins and causes of diseases have been investigated, the appropriate medical remedy will not be able to be administered to the sick and the means of maintaining perfect health will not be able to be passed on to the well. For this—and much more than this—is wont to be spoken about in conferences by the elders, who have experience of the downfall and ruin of many different persons, for the instruction of the younger men. Often recognizing in ourselves many of these things, thanks to the explanations and discussions of the elders, who were themselves stricken by the same passions, we were cured without any shame or embarrassment on our part when we too learned in silence about the

remedies for and the causes of the vices that were assailing us. We have concealed or passed over these not out of fear of the body of the brothers but lest perchance this book fall into the hands of those who seem less well trained in this chosen orientation and expose to the inexperienced things that should be disclosed only to those who are toiling and striving to attain to the summit of perfection.

XIV. 1. And so this debilitating disease, which is condemned by all the fathers with equal detestation, has three aspects. One, whose stain we described earlier, is that which deceives wretches and induces them to store up things that in fact they had never possessed when they were living in the world. Another is that which urges people to take up again and to desire once more things that they had given up at the start of their renunciation. A third is that which is contracted as the result of a bad and vicious beginning and which starts off people in imperfection; those whose minds it has once infected with lukewarmness and who are terrified by their fear of poverty and by their lack of faith it does not permit to despoil of all their worldly goods, and those who keep back money and belongings that they ought to have given up when they made their renunciation it does not allow ever to arrive at gospel perfection. We find that there are examples of these three downfalls in Holy Scripture and that they were condemned to no insignificant punishment. 2. For Gehazi, who wanted to acquire things that he had never in fact possessed before, not only did not deserve to possess the grace of prophecy, which was his to receive in turn from his master as an inheritance, but he was even, on the contrary, covered with an eternal leprosy after being cursed by the holy Elisha.7 Judas, wishing to take up the money again that he had renounced when previously he had followed Christ, not only fell into betraying the Lord and lost the rank of an apostle but he did not even deserve to bring his life to a conclusion with a normal death; instead he terminated it with a suicide.8 Ananias and Sapphira, who held back a certain part of what they possessed,

were punished with death at the apostle's word.9

XV. 1. Concerning those, then, who say that they have renounced this world but who afterwards are hobbled by lack of faith and are afraid to be stripped of earthly goods, it is mystically laid down in Deuteronomy: "If there is a man who is easily frightened and fainthearted," he should not go to war. "Let him go back to his home, lest he make his brothers fainthearted, just as he himself is terrified."10 I ask, what is clearer than this text? Does not Scripture manifestly prefer them not to take upon themselves either the beginning or the name of this profession than by evil suggestions and example to draw others away as well from gospel perfection and to weaken them with fear and lack of faith? 2. And so they are ordered to leave the battle and to go back to their houses, because a person of double heart cannot wage war for the Lord, for "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."11 And, reflecting on the man who in the gospel parable went out with ten thousand men but could not do battle against a king advancing with twenty thousand,12 they should sue for peace while they are still at a distance—that is, they should not even begin renunciation rather than pursue it lukewarmly afterwards and involve themselves in greater danger. For "it is better not to vow than to vow and not to pay."13 3. It is well said that one man came with ten thousand men and the other with twenty thousand. For greater is the number of vices assailing us than that of the virtues struggling on our behalf. But "no one can serve God and mammon."14 And "anyone who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not fit for the kingdom of God."15

XVI. These persons, then, try to justify their former avarice to themselves by a kind of recourse to Holy Scripture, which they interpret by a false understanding of the Apostle and even by seeking to corrupt the words of the Lord and twisting them to their own ends. They do not adjust their own lives and ways of thinking to the meaning of Scripture. Instead they adapt the power

of Scripture to their own wanton desires by looking to harmonize it with their own opinions and by saying that it is written: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."16 By a most wicked interpretation of this they consider softened the words of the Lord wherein it is stated: "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me."17 Using the former words as their pretext, they are of the opinion that they should not renounce their wealth, declaring that they would be more blessed if, with their former property as a basis, they were to make gifts to others from its excess. Inasmuch as they are ashamed to take up a glorious poverty for Christ's sake, along with the Apostle, they refuse to be satisfied with either manual labor or the frugality of the monastery. What is left for such persons is either to know that they have cheated themselves and that, by giving themselves over to their former wealth, they have never renounced this world, or, if they really and truly wish to undertake the profession of a monk, to disperse and give away everything, to hold back nothing of what they have renounced, and, with the Apostle, to glory "in hunger and thirst, in cold and in nakedness."18

XVII. 1. As if he too could not have supported himself with his former property—he who testified that he was not undistinguished even by this world's standards when he declared that he was endowed by birth with the dignity of Roman citizenship19— had he judged that this would have been more conducive to perfection! And as if those who dwelled in Jerusalem—who sold everything and held back nothing whatsoever for themselves, bringing the price of it all and laying it at the feet of the apostles, although they possessed fields and houses20—could not have catered to the needs of their bodies from their own property had the apostles judged that this would have been more perfect and had they themselves deemed it more beneficial! Instead, abandoning all their property at once, they chose to be supported by their own labor and by a collection from the Gentiles. 2. The holy Apostle writes to the

Romans about their contribution, speaking to them of his own ministry in this regard and gently urging them to make this collection when he says: "Now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the holy ones. For it has pleased Macedonia and Achaia to take up a collection for the poor of the holy ones who are in Jerusalem. It has pleased them, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have become sharers in their spiritual things, they must also minister to them in fleshly things."21 3. Displaying a similar concern in this matter to the Corinthians, he admonishes them to take up a collection with care before his arrival, which they would plan to send for their needs: "Concerning the collection that is made for the holy ones, you too should do what I have commanded the churches of Galatia to do. Each one of you should store up for the first day of the week and set aside on his own whatever is well pleasing to him, so that the collection is not taken up when I come. But when I come, I shall send to carry your kindness to Jerusalem whomever you have approved of by letter."22 And, in order to urge them to a more generous collection, he adds: "But if it is appropriate that I go, they shall go with me"23—that is, if your offering is such as to deserve to be borne by me. 4. He testifies to the Galatians, too, that when he was sharing the ministry of preaching with the apostles he made an agreement with James, Peter, and John that, although he would preach to the Gentiles, he would nonetheless not refuse care and concern to the poor who were in Jerusalem and who, for the sake of Christ, had renounced all their property and had voluntarily submitted to neediness. "And when," he says, "they saw the grace of God that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, extended the right hand of friendship to me and Barnabas, so that we would preach among the Gentiles but they to the circumcision —only that we should be mindful of the poor."24 5. He testified that he would carry this out very carefully when he said: "This very thing I was anxious to do myself."25

Who, then, are more blessed? Those who were recently gathered

from the number of the Gentiles, who were unable to mount to gospel perfection and still clung to their own property, and who were considered by the apostle to have produced great fruits merely if they abstained from "the worship of idols and fornication and strangled animals and blood"[26] and accepted faith in Christ while maintaining their property? Or those who, observing the words of the Gospel and carrying the Lord's cross daily,[27] desired to keep nothing of their own goods for themselves?

6. Consider the blessed Apostle himself, bound in chains and imprisoned, or burdened by the difficulties of travel, and therefore unable to supply his usual needs by his own hands, as was his custom. He declares that he accepted help in his neediness from brothers who had come from Macedonia. "For," he says, "brothers who came from Macedonia made up for what was lacking to me."[28] And to the Philippians he says: "You also know, O Philippians, that in the early days of the Gospel, when I came from Macedonia, no church communicated with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone, because even in Thessalonica you twice sent me things for my needs."[29] In the opinion of those persons, which they have formed in a lukewarm mind, are they more blessed than the Apostle because it is seen that they catered to him out of their own property? No one, however foolish, would dare to say this.

XVIII. Hence, if we wish to obey the gospel precept and to be imitators of the Apostle and of the entire early Church and of our fathers, who have in our day succeeded to their virtues and perfection, we must not stick to our own opinions by promising ourselves gospel perfection in our present lukewarm and wretched condition. Instead we must follow in their footsteps and not attempt to deceive ourselves. We must pursue the discipline and the instruction of the monastery in such a way as truly to renounce this world; and not, at the urging of infidelity, and not keeping behind anything of what we have contemned, which

infidelity would urge, we must procure our daily bread by our own toil rather than with stored-up money.

XIX. Some words of Saint Basil, bishop of Caesarea, were reportedly directed to a certain Syncletius, who was languishing in the kind of lukewarmness that we have spoken about. Although he said that he had renounced this world, he kept back some of his own property for himself, not wishing to be supported by the work of his own hands or to acquire true humility by poverty, tedious toil, and submission in the monastery. And he said: "Syncletius the senator you did away with, but you did not make him a monk."

XX. And so, if we wish to struggle lawfully in the spiritual contest, we must also cast out this pernicious enemy from our hearts. It is not that overcoming him is a matter of great virtue so much as that being conquered by him is ignominious and utterly shameful. For although there is sadness in defeat and groaning in the loss of victory when one is beaten by a powerful person, there is nonetheless, for those who have been conquered, some consolation in the fact of the adversary's strength. But if the enemy is weak and the struggle is faint, then, in addition to the sadness of defeat, the shame is deeper and the ignominy is more serious than the loss.

XXI. In this regard the highest victory and the most enduring triumph will occur when, as it is said, the conscience of the monk is soiled not even by a tiny copper coin. For it is impossible for a person who has been overcome by the desire for a small sum of money and who has planted its root in his heart not to be set ablaze at once by the fire of a still greater desire. For the soldier of Christ will be victorious and safely removed from every onslaught of covetousness so long as this most evil spirit does not sow in his heart the beginnings of this desire. Hence, although the serpent's head30 should be watched out for in every kind of vice in general, it should be more diligently paid heed to here in particular. If it has been let in it will grow strong by feeding upon itself, and it will

produce fiercer fires. And therefore not only should the possession of money be bewared of but even the desire itself should be utterly cast out of one's mind. For it is not so much the result of avarice that must be avoided as it is the disposition toward it that must be uprooted, since it is profitless not to have money if the desire to possess it exists in us.

XXII. For it is possible even for someone who does not have any to be in the grip of the disease of avarice and for the benefit of poverty to be of no value to him because he has not succeeded in cutting away the vice of covetousness, is not virtuously delighted with the advantage of poverty, and endures the burden of want with a weary heart. Just as the words of the Gospel declare that even those who are not soiled in body have committed adultery in their heart,31 it is also possible for those who are not weighed down by money to be condemned along with the avaricious for their disposition and attitude. For it was the opportunity to possess that they lacked, not the desire, and it is this latter, rather than need, that God is always wont to crown. And so let us strive not to lose, for foolish reasons, the rewards of our labors. For to have put up with the effects of poverty and need, but to have lost their fruits because of a vain and vicious desire, is a wretched thing.

XXIII. Do you wish to know how wickedly and harmfully that shoot will sprout, to the ruin of the one who begot it, and how it will produce all sorts of vicious branches unless it has been carefully cut away? Consider Judas, who was numbered among the apostles and who did not wish to crush this serpent's deadly head —how it destroyed him with its poison, entangled him in the snares of desire and drove him to a criminal and speedy end by persuading him to sell the world's redeemer and the author of human salvation for thirty pieces of silver.32 Never would he have fallen into the abominable villainy of betrayal had he not been infected with the disease of avarice, nor would he have been guilty

of sacrilegiously denying the Lord if he had not first been in the habit of stealing from the purse that was entrusted to him.33

XXIV. Let this suffice as a monstrous and clear example of this tyranny that, as we have said, does not allow the soul, once it has been taken captive, to keep any righteous rule or to be satisfied with any increase of income. For this madness is stopped not with wealth but with poverty. Finally, when he had received the purse that was destined for distribution to the poor and that was entrusted to his keeping so that, having plenty of money at his disposal, he might at least set some limits to his desire, he made so much of his plenty that he created the desire for a still greater abundance, with the result that he no longer secretly stole from the purse but sought to sell the Lord himself. For the madness of covetousness is that it always wants more than whatever a person can accumulate.

XXV. 1. Lastly, the leader of the apostles, having learned from examples like these and knowing that a person possessed by covetousness cannot be restrained and that it is not stopped with a small or large sum of money but solely with the virtue of poverty, condemned to death Ananias and Sapphira, whom we mentioned earlier, because they had kept for themselves some of their own property. Thus the ruin that the one had brought upon himself for his gratuitous crime of betraying the Lord, these others suffered for their covetous lie. What great similarity there is regarding the crime and the punishment in this respect! In the one case betrayal follows upon avarice, in the other falsehood. In the one case truth is betrayed, in the other the crime of lying is committed. Although the outcome of their deeds may appear different, there is nonetheless one end in both instances. 2. For the former abandoned poverty and desired to take up again what he had renounced, while the latter, lest they become poor, tried to hold back something of the property that they should have trustingly offered to the apostles or distributed in its entirety to the

brothers. Therefore the punishment of death follows in both cases because each crime sprang from the roots of avarice. And so, if such a harsh sentence was leveled against those who did not yearn after other people's property but tried to spare their own, and who did not want to gain anything but only to hold something back, what are we to think of those who desire to accumulate money that they have never possessed and who, while displaying poverty in the sight of men, are proved to be rich in the sight of God because of their covetous disposition?

XXVI. These people are known to be leprous in spirit and mind, like Gehazi, who, in his desire for the empty riches of this world, was defiled with the unclean contagion of leprosy.34 In that respect he left us a clear example of how every soul that is polluted by the stain of covetousness is defiled by the spiritual leprosy of vice and, by reason of a perpetual curse, is considered unclean in the sight of God.

XXVII. Hence if, out of a desire for perfection, you have abandoned everything and have followed Christ, who tells you: "Go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me," why do you look back, now that your hand is on the plow, so as to be declared, in the words of the same Lord, unfit for the kingdom of heaven?35 Now that you have found a secure place on the summit of the gospel dwelling, why do you come down to remove from your house something that you had previously disdained?36 Now that you are in the field and acting virtuously, why do you run back and try to furnish yourself again with the goods of the world that you had renounced and despoiled yourself of?37 But if you were prevented by poverty from having anything to give up, much less ought you to acquire what you did not possess beforehand. For it was for this that you were prepared by the Lord's kindness—that you might be able to hasten to him unencumbered and unimpeded by any monetary hindrances. But let not someone who is needy in this respect

be shaken, for there is no one who does not have something to give up. Whoever has cut off at the roots the disposition to possess every one of the world's goods has renounced them.

XXVIII. The perfect victory over avarice, then, takes place when we do not allow the embers of even the smallest sum of money to remain in our heart, being certain that later on we shall not be able to extinguish them if we have let them glow, however dimly, within ourselves.

XXIX. This virtue we shall not be able to maintain unsullied if, while we are in the monastery, we are not, in the words of the Apostle, satisfied with the food and clothing that we have.

XXX. Remembering, then, the condemnation of Ananias and Sapphira, let us shudder to hold back anything that we have renounced and vowed to give up completely. Let us be frightened as well at the example of Gehazi, who was punished with the torment of an eternal leprosy on account of his blameworthy avarice, and let us beware of acquiring anything that we had not possessed previously. Fearful, too, of the deserts and end of Judas, let us most virtuously avoid taking up again any money that we have once cast from us. Considering all these things, let us pay heed to our natural condition in its frailty and uncertainty, lest the day of the Lord come upon us like a thief in the night[38] and find our conscience stained by even a single obol. This would nullify all the fruits of our renunciation and cause to be addressed to us as well what was said by the Lord in the Gospel to the rich man: "Fool, this night they are demanding your soul of you. But all that you have laid aside—whose will it be?"[39] And, thinking nothing of the morrow,[40] let us never permit ourselves to be snatched away from the discipline of the cenobium.

XXXI. Without a doubt we shall never be allowed to accomplish this, nor even to abide under a rule of instruction, unless the virtue of patience, which has nothing else than humility as its source, is first firmly and solidly founded in us. For it knows not

how to impose burdens on anyone else but magnanimously endures the burdens imposed on it.

Textual References

1. 1 Tm 6:10.
2. 2 Cor 7:10.
3. Cf. Phil 3.19.
4. Col 3:5 7.7.5.
5. 1 Tm 6:8.
6. 1 Tm 6:9–10.
7. Cf. 2 Kgs 5:27.
8. Cf. Mt 27:5.
9. Cf. Acts 5:5,10.
10. Dt 20:8.
11. Jas 1:8.
12. Cf. Lk 14:31–32.
13. Eccl 5:4 LXX.
14. Mt 6:24.
15. Lk 9:62.
16. Acts 20:35.
17. Mt 19:21.
18. 2 Cor 11:27.
19. Cf. Acts 22:28.
20. Cf. Acts 4:34–35.
21. Rom 15:25–27.
22. 1 Cor 16:1–3.
23. 1 Cor 16:4.
24. Gal 2:9–10a.
25. Gal 2:10b.
26. Acts 15:20.
27. Cf. Mt 10:9.
28. 2 Cor 11:9.
29. Phil 4:15–16.

30. Cf. Gn 3:15.
31. Cf. Mt 5:28.
32. Cf. Mt 26:14–16.
33. Cf. Jn 12:6.
34. Cf. 2 Kgs 5:27.
35. Cf. Lk 9:62.
36. Cf. Lk 17:31a.
37. Cf. Lk 17:31b.
38. Cf. 1 Thes 5:4.
39. Lk 12:20.
40. Cf. Mt 6:34.

Notes to the Text

7.1ff. That some vices are external to the nature of the person is discussed in *Conlat.* 5.8. Cf. the relevant note.

7.3.1 Simple movements of the flesh: This evidently refers to spontaneous erections. On the use of the term "simple," which, according to Cassian, means "guiltless" when occurring in a sexual context, cf. the note at *Conlat.* 22.3.5.

Cassian's view of children's anger is very close to that expressed in Augustine, *Conf.* 1.7.11, and it stands in contrast to the somewhat romantic notion of childhood passionlessness found in Chrysostom, *Serm. in Matth.* 62.4.

7.3.2f. That the emotions have a positive side is also taught in 8.7ff.; Origen, *Hom. in Cant. Cant.* 2.1; Lactantius, *Div. inst.* 6.19; Gregory of Nyssa, *De virg.* 18.3; Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 9.5.

7.4 That the human misuse of iron does not inculpate the Creator of iron is a variant of a proverb that takes many forms, several of them listed in Chrysostom, *De sacerd.* 3.10: The knife is not responsible for murder, nor wine for

drunkenness, nor strength for impudence, nor courage for recklessness.

7.7.3 On the value of the denarius, cf. the note at 4.14.

7.7.3ff. The insatiableness of avarice is a commonplace in patristic literature. Cf. Zeno of Verona, *Tract.* 1.21 (CCSL 22.68); Ambrose, *De Nabuthae* 2.4; Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps.* 39.7.

7.7.6 Cassian speaks of avarice here as idolatry because the avaricious person prefers the figures on gold coins (of emperors and the like) to God himself. The same idea appears more strongly in Jerome, *Comm. in Ep. ad Eph.* 5:5.

7.8 The image of the uncontrollable horse is one that seems to appeal to Cassian. Cf. also 8.18 and *Conlat.* 24.5.1 (with the relevant note).

7.13 The idea that not everyone is worthy to hear certain things pertaining to the spiritual life is a common theme in *The Conferences.* Cf. the note at *Conlat.* 1.1.

7.14 The three aspects of avarice that are mentioned here also appear in *Conlat.* 5.11.6, although they are listed there in another order. A slight variation on them is to be found in 12.26.

7.15.3 In *Conlat.* 5.16.1f. another scriptural text—Dt 7:1–2—is used as a basis for saying that the number of the vices is greater than that of the virtues.

7.16 Acts 20:35 ("It is more blessed to give than to receive") is also cited as a witness against voluntary poverty in Fastidius (?), *De divitiis* 15 (PL Suppl. 1.1403–1405). Clement of Alexandria, in *Quis dives salvetur* 13ff., is the first to offer as a justification for not observing Mt 19:21 ("If you wish to be

perfect...") literally the fact that, once a person has given away all his money, he can no longer help the poor.

7.17.5 The inferiority of the Gentiles in this regard is likewise asserted in Jerome, *C. Iovinianum* 1.34.

7.17.6 "Those persons" whose opinion was "formed in a lukewarm mind" are the monks who, in 7.16, are said to seek to justify the retention of some of their property by recourse to Acts 20:35.

7.19 On Basil, cf. the note at praef. 5. Neither this Syncletius nor Basil's words to him are otherwise known.

Tiny copper coin: *Nummus.* Cf. the note at 4.3.1.

7.21 On the imagery of "the soldier of Christ," cf. the note at 1.1.1.

Result...disposition: *Effectus...affectus.*

7.30 An obol was a Greek coin of very little value.

The juxtaposition of the allusion to Mt 6:34, about not thinking of the morrow, and the mention of the discipline of the cenobium looks forward to *Conlat.* 19.8.3, where the end of the cenobite is defined in terms of Mt 6:34.

EIGHTH BOOK: THE SPIRIT OF ANGER

Chapters

I. That the fourth struggle is against the vice of anger, and how many evils this disturbance generates.

II. On those who say that anger is not harmful, if we are angry with wrongdoers, because even God himself is said to be angered.

III. On those things that are in God and that are designated in terms of our nature.

IV. What we are to think of the human dispositions and bodily parts that we read are ascribed to the immutable and incorporeal God.

V. On the peaceful disposition that the monk should have.

VI. On the unrighteous and righteous disturbance of wrath.

VII. On the only case in which anger is necessary for us.

VIII. Examples from blessed David of anger rightfully assumed.

IX. On the anger that should be leveled against ourselves.

X. Of what sun it is said that it must not go down on our anger.

XI. On those on whose wrath even sundown imposes no limits.

XII. That the end of sadness and anger is that a person carry it out to the extent possible.

XIII. That anger should not be retained even for a moment.

XIV. On brotherly reconciliation.

XV. That the old law as well forbids anger not only in deed but also in thought.

XVI. On the vain reclusion of those who do not withdraw from their improper habits.

XVII. That our tranquillity of heart must not depend on

another's will but on our own doing.

XVIII. With what zeal we must seek out the desert, and in what sorts of things progress is made there.

XIX. What comparison is to be used in the case of those who are patient only when no one provokes them.

XX. On cutting off anger according to the Gospel.

XXI. Whether we should accept the words "without cause," which are added to what is written in the Gospel: "Whoever is angry with his brother."

XXII. The remedy by which we can uproot anger from our hearts.

I. 1. In the fourth struggle it is the deadly poison of anger that must be totally uprooted from the depths of our soul. For as long as it resides in our hearts and blinds our mind's eye with its harmful darkness, we shall be able neither to acquire the judgment of a proper discretion nor to possess a good contemplative vision or a mature counsel, and we shall not be sharers in life, tenacious of righteousness, and certainly not receptive to the spiritual and true light, because, as it is said, "my eye has been disturbed by anger."[1] 2. Nor shall we share in wisdom, even though we seem to be declared wise in the opinion of all, "because anger reposes in the breast of the foolish,"[2] and we shall certainly be unable to attain to a life of immortality, although we seem to be considered prudent in the understanding of men, because "anger destroys even the prudent."[3] Nor shall we be able to get a grasp on righteousness as a result of our heart's clear-sighted discretion, however perfect and holy we are held to be in everyone's estimation, because "man's anger does not work God's righteousness."[4] We shall also be absolutely unable to possess the gravity of honor, which is habitual even with men of this world, even though we are thought of as noble and honorable thanks to the privilege of our birth, because "the wrathful man is dishonorable."[5] 3. Nor shall we

in any way be able to attain to mature counsel, however serious and highly endowed with knowledge we may seem to be, because "the wrathful person acts without counsel."[6] And we shall be able neither to be untouched by harmful disturbances nor to be free of sin, even though no one ever causes us annoyance, because "the passionate man begets quarrels, and the wrathful man digs up sins."[7]

II. We have heard that some people try to excuse this most destructive disease of the soul by attempting to extenuate it by a rather detestable interpretation of Scripture. They say that it is not harmful if we are angry with wrongdoing brothers, because God himself is said to be enraged and angered with those who do not want to know him or who, knowing him, disdain him. For example: "The Lord was angry and enraged against his people."[8] And when the prophet prays and says: "Lord, do not rebuke me in your fury, nor in your anger correct me."[9] They do not understand that, in their eagerness to concede human beings the opportunity for pernicious vice, they are mixing the injustice of fleshly passion into the divine limitlessness and the source of all purity.

III. For if these things that are said of God are to be accepted according to the letter and with a carnal and crass understanding, then he of whom it is said: "Behold, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep"[10] also sleeps, since it is said: "Arise, Lord, why do you sleep?"[11] And he stands and sits, since it is said: "Heaven is my seat, and the earth is a footstool for my feel"[12]—he who "measures the heavens with his palm and encloses the earth in his fist."[13] And he gets drunk with wine, since it is said: "And the Lord rose up as if from slumber, like a strong man drunken with wine"[14]—he "who alone has immortality and dwells in inaccessible light."[15]

I pass over ignorance and forgetfulness, which we read are frequently attributed to him in Holy Scripture, and also bodily parts, which are described in terms of human shape and arrange-

ment—namely, hair, head and nose, eyes and face, hands and arm, fingers, belly, and feet. If we wished to take all of this in a crude literal way, it would be necessary to think of God as formed of bodily parts and a bodily shape. But far be it from us to say such a wicked thing.

IV. 1. And so, since these things cannot without horrible sacrilege be literally understood of him who is declared by the authority of Holy Scripture to be invisible, ineffable, incomprehensible, inestimable, simple, and uncomposite, the disturbance of anger (not to mention wrath) cannot be attributed to that immutable nature without monstrous blasphemy. For when bodily parts of this sort are mentioned, we ought to think of the divine powers of God and of his ungraspable workings, which cannot be intimated to us except by way of these familiar terms for bodily parts. 2. For example, by the term "mouth" we should understand that conversation of his which he is wont to carry on softly in the inmost recesses of our souls, or what he spoke to our fathers and to the prophets. By "eyes" we should be able to recognize that sharp and unobstructed gaze with which he surveys and views all things, and the fact that nothing that is done or will be done or that is thought by us is hidden from him. By the designation "hands" we should understand that providence and activity by which he is the creator and author of all things. "Arm" refers to that power and governance by which he sustains, directs, and rules all things. And, to say nothing of other things, what else does his white hair signify if not the longevity and great age of the Godhead, whereby he has no beginning, is before all time, and transcends all creatures?

3. Thus, when we read of God's anger and wrath, we must not think of it ἀνθρωποπαθῶς—that is, in terms of lowly human disturbances, but in a manner worthy of God, who is free of all disturbance. In other words, we should thereby be able to see in him the judge and avenger of every wicked deed in this world and,

by way of this terminology, fear him as the terrible repayer of our acts and be afraid to do anything against his will. 4. For human nature is accustomed to fear those who it knows get angry, and it hesitates to offend them. As is the case with some most-just judges, avenging anger is often feared by those who are bitten by a guilty conscience—not that this disturbance is found in the souls of those who will judge justly but that the disposition that is directed toward the execution of the laws, the weighing of guilt, and careful deliberation is thus felt by those who are afraid. With whatever mildness and gentleness of spirit it may be carried out, this is nonetheless considered high wrath and the cruelest anger by those who are to be deservedly punished.

5. The present work would be too long if we chose to explain everything in Scripture that is said figuratively and in human terms about God. Let it suffice to have said this much with respect to our current concern, which is directed against the vice of wrath, so that no one may, through ignorance, derive the wherewithal for sickness and everlasting death from the very place where holiness, immortal life, and the medicine of salvation are obtained.

V. And so the monk who is on the way to perfection and who wishes to engage lawfully in the spiritual struggle must in every respect be free of the vice of anger and wrath. He should listen to what the vessel of election[16] commands of him: "All anger and indignation and uproar and blasphemy should be removed from you, as well as all malice."[17] (When he says: "All anger should be removed from you," he makes no exception at all for us as to necessity and utility.) He should strive to cure a wrongdoing brother, if need be, in such a way that, while bringing relief to one who is perhaps laboring under a rather slight fever, he does not get angry and bring upon himself the more baleful malady of blindness, so that as he sees the speck in his brother's eye he does not see the beam in his own eye.[18] For it behooves the one who wishes to heal someone else's wound to be healthy and untouched

by any disease or illness, lest the gospel saying be applied to him: "Physician, heal yourself first."[19] And how will a person see to remove the speck from his brother's eye if he carries about a beam of wrath in his own eye?

VI. For any reason whatsoever the movement of wrath may boil over and blind the eyes of the heart, obstructing the vision with the deadly beam of a more vehement illness and not allowing the sun of righteousness[20] to be seen. It is irrelevant whether a layer of gold or one of lead or of some other metal is placed over the eyes; the preciousness of the metal does not change the fact of blindness.

VII. Yet we have a function for anger placed quite appropriately within us, and for this purpose alone it is useful and beneficial for us to take it up—when we wax indignant against the wanton movements of our own heart and are angered at things that we are ashamed to do or to say in the sight of human beings but that have found their way into the recesses of our heart, as we tremble with utter horror before the presence of the angels and of God himself, whose eye penetrates everywhere and everything and from whom our consciences can hide no secrets at all;

VIII. 1. and certainly when we are disturbed at this very anger because it has stolen upon us against our brother, and we angrily cast out its deadly suggestions and do not permit it to maintain its noxious lair in the recesses of our heart. To be angry in this latter way is also taught us by that prophet who so eradicated this from his mind that he did not even want to take revenge on his own enemies, who had in fact been handed over to him by God, when he said: "Be angry, and do not sin."[21] 2. For when he wanted water from a well in Bethlehem and had been brought it by strong men from the midst of enemy troops, he at once poured it out on the ground and, angrily extinguishing his wanton and passionate desire in this way, he offered it as a libation to the Lord, rejecting his yearning and desire with the words: "May the Lord be gracious

to me, lest I do this. Shall I drink the blood of those men who went out and the danger of their souls?"[22] 3. And when Shimei threw stones at King David and cursed him in his hearing and in front of everyone, and Abishai the son of Zeruiah, the captain of the soldiers, wanted to avenge the insult to the king by cutting off his head, blessed David was moved with holy indignation against his dreadful suggestion and with unshaken mildness clung to humility and an unyielding patience, saying: "How does this affect me and you, sons of Zeruiah? Let him alone to curse. For the Lord has ordered him to curse David, and who would dare to say: Why does he behave thus? Behold, my son, who came forth from my loins, seeks my life. How much more now this son of Benjamin! Let him curse in accordance with the Lord's command. Perhaps the Lord will look upon my affliction and return me good for this cursing today."[23]

IX. And so we are commanded to get angry in a healthy way, at ourselves and at the evil suggestions that make an appearance, and not to sin by letting them have a harmful effect. The following verse opens itself to this same understanding in clearer fashion: "Be struck with compunction on your beds for what you say in your hearts."[24] That is, whatever you think in your hearts when unexpected and deceitful suggestions rush in upon you, amend and correct with the most salutary compunction, removing all the noise and disturbance of wrath by means of moderate counsel, as if you were peacefully in bed.

When the blessed Apostle made use of the text of this verse and said: "Be angry, and do not sin," he added: "The sun should not go down on your anger, and you should not give room to the devil."[25] If it is dangerous to let the sun of righteousness go down on our anger, and if we immediately give room to the devil in our heart when we are angry, why did he previously command us to get angry, when he said: "Be angry, and do not sin"? Does he not clearly mean that you should be angry at your vices and your rage

lest you grow dark on account of your wrath and Christ, the sun of righteousness, begin to go down in your dusky minds and, once he departs, you offer room in your hearts to the devil?

X. God clearly makes mention of this sun when he says through the prophet: "For those who fear my name the sun of righteousness shall arise, with healing in his wings."[26] On the other hand, it is said to go down at midday on sinners, false prophets, and those who get angry, as the prophet says: "The sun shall go down for them at noon."[27]

Certainly the mind (that is, the νοῦς or reason), which according to a tropical understanding is rightfully called a sun because it surveys all the thoughts and judgments of the heart, must not be extinguished by the vice of anger. Otherwise, when it goes down and the darkness of disturbances—along with their author, the devil—occupies all our heart's understanding and we have been possessed by the darkness of anger as if we were in the depths of night, we shall not know how we are to act. It is with this understanding that we have produced this passage from the Apostle, which was given to us when we were taught by the elders, because it was necessary to know what they thought about anger, even if it meant a lengthier treatment. They do not allow it to enter our hearts even for a moment, holding to the words of the Gospel in every respect: "Whoever is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment."[28] But if it is lawful to be angry until sundown, the repletion of our wrath and the vengefulness of our anger will be in a position to bring our harmful and upsetting disturbance to a boil before the sun goes down.

XI. But what is to be said of those persons (and this I am unable to mention without shame) on whose implacability even sundown itself places no limits and who draw it out for days on end? They maintain a rancorous spirit against those with whom they are upset and, although they deny orally that they are angry, they manifest the deepest anger by their actions. They neither

approach them with an appropriate word nor speak to them with ordinary civility, and in this regard they do not consider themselves in the wrong because they do not demand vengeance for their annoyance. Yet, because they do not dare to or at any rate cannot bring it out into the open, they turn the poison of their wrath back to their own destruction, brooding over it in their hearts and in glum silence digesting it within themselves. They do not at once and with strength of mind cast out their bitter sadness; instead they mull it over, and eventually as time goes on they deal with it equably.

XII. But it seems that this is not the last of vengeance for some people. There are those who fully satisfy their rage and annoyance only if they go as far as they can at the instigation of anger. (It is known that persons do this who suppress their impulses not out of peaceful feelings but because they have no opportunity for revenge, for they are unable to do anything else to those with whom they are angry except to stop talking to them with ordinary civility.) Or it seems that wrath is to be controlled only from the perspective of its symptoms and not rather to be rooted out from the depths of our heart, with the result that we are blinded by its darkness and are unable to let in the light of salutary counsel and knowledge or to be temples of the Holy Spirit,29 since an evil spirit dwells within us. For rage that has been suppressed in one's heart is, to be sure, of no offense to one's neighbors, but it excludes the splendid radiance of the Holy Spirit just as if it had been brought out into the open.

XIII. How could the Lord wish it to be held onto for even a moment when in fact he does not even allow the spiritual sacrifices of our prayers to be offered if we know that someone else is angry with us? As he says: "If, then, you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your

gift."[30] How, then, are we permitted to be annoyed with our brother even until sundown—not to mention for several days—when, if he has something against us, we are not allowed to offer our prayers to God? We are commanded by the Apostle: "Pray without ceasing."[31] And: "In every place lifting up pure hands without anger and dissension."[32] It follows, therefore, that either we keep this kind of poison in our hearts and never pray, thus disobeying the apostolic and gospel precept by which we are commanded to pray ceaselessly and everywhere, or, if we deceive ourselves and dare to make prayer contrary to his prohibition, we realize that it is not prayer that we are offering to the Lord but a stubborn and rebellious spirit.

XIV. And since we often disdain brothers who have been hurt and who are aggrieved, or at least despise them by saying that they have not been offended by any wrongdoing of ours, the physician of souls and the overseer of things hidden, in his desire to pluck out utterly from our hearts the occasions of wrath, not only commands us, if we have been hurt, to forgive our brothers, to be reconciled with them and not to hold against them the memory of any misdeed or hurt, but he likewise orders us, if we know that they have something against us, whether rightly or wrongly, to leave our gift (that is, to suppress our prayers), to hasten first to offer them satisfaction, and then, once our brother has been healed, to produce the untainted gifts of our prayers. For it is not thus that the common Lord of all is pleased with our services—that what he gains in one he should lose in another because he is aggrieved. For he who desires and looks forward to the salvation of all his servants in the same way suffers loss when anyone is disadvantaged. And therefore, if our brother has something against us, our prayer will be just as inefficacious as it would be if we ourselves felt bitter against him and were swollen with a wrathful spirit.

XV. But why do we tarry for so long over gospel precepts and

those of the Apostle when even the old law, which seems to be somewhat less demanding, warns of the very same thing? As it says: "You shall not hate your brother in your heart."[33] And again: "You shall not be mindful of the offense of your fellow citizens."[34] And again: "The ways of those who preserve the memory of a misdeed lead to death."[35] There as well you see that wickedness is checked not only in deed but even in secret thoughts, when not only hatred and vengefulness but even the recollection of an offense are commanded to be uprooted and cast out of the heart.

XVI. Sometimes, when we have been overcome by pride or impatience and are unwilling to correct our unseemly and undisciplined behavior, we complain that we are in need of solitude, as if we would find the virtue of patience in a place where no one would bother us, and we excuse our negligence and the causes of our agitation by saying that they stem not from our own impatience but from our brothers' faults. But, as long as we attribute our own wrongdoing to other people, we shall never be able to get near to patience and perfection.

XVII. The sum total of our improvement and tranquillity, then, must not be made to depend on someone else's willing, which will never be subject to our sway; it comes, rather, under our own power. And so our not getting angry must derive not from someone else's perfection but from our own virtue, which is achieved not by another person's patience but by our own forbearance.

XVIII. It is right, on the other hand, for those who are perfect and cleansed of all vice to search out the desert and, having been purged of vice in the community of the brothers, to go into it not as a refuge for their weak-spiritedness but with a view to divine contemplation and out of a desire for that deeper insight which can be grasped in solitude only by the perfect. For if we have brought any vices into the desert that we have not attended to, they will not be abolished but will lie hidden in us. For just as

solitude can disclose the purest contemplation to those whose behavior has been corrected and from its unclouded perspective reveal a knowledge of spiritual mysteries, it is likewise accustomed not only to preserve but even to exaggerate the vices of those who have not corrected themselves. A person may seem patient and humble to himself as long as he has nothing to do with anyone else, but he will soon revert to his former nature should some disturbing event occur. Indeed, vices that have lain hidden emerge at once there, and like unbridled horses nourished by a long period of quiescence they eagerly break out of their restraints, all the more violently and savagely endangering their charioteer. For when contact with other human beings ceases, along with the discipline that that provides, the vices grow wilder in us if they have not previously been purged, and through slothful security we lose even the pretense of patience that we gave the appearance of possessing at least for the sake of our brothers' respect and our own good reputation when we lived among them.

XIX. 1. But, like all the poisonous kinds of serpents and wild animals, they are not harmless even when they remain in solitude and in their lairs, and they cannot be pronounced harmless because they harm no one, for this is the result not of a good disposition on their part but of the restrictions of solitude. When they light on the possibility of doing injury, they at once draw forth the poison that lies concealed in them and show their ferocious nature. Hence it is not enough for those who are seeking perfection not to be angry at another human being. 2. For we remember that, when we were living in the desert, a feeling of outrage would steal in upon us at our pen, if either its thickness or its thinness displeased us, and at our penknife, if its edge was dull and it cut badly what needed cutting, and at our flint, if it was too slow in producing a spark of fire when we were anxious to read. So great was it that we could not dissipate and get rid of our disturbance of mind other than by cursing either insensible objects or at least the devil. 3. Therefore it is not enough that, as a basis

for perfection, there merely be an absence of human beings to get angry at, inasmuch as, if patience has not first been acquired, a wrathful disposition can also be exercised even against dumb objects; and, if such dwells in our heart, it will permit us neither to possess an enduring state of tranquillity nor to be without a residue of vice. But we may think, alternatively, that there is some gain or healing with respect to our being upset in the fact that insensible and dumb things do not respond to our curses and wrath and never cause our intemperate heart to break out into a still more furious rage.

XX. 1. Hence, if we desire to obtain in its entirety that divine prize of which it is said: "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God,"[36] this must not only be cut off from our actions but must even be uprooted from the depths of our soul. For a wrathful anger that has been checked in speech and that has not manifested itself in deeds is of no value whatsoever if God, from whom the secrets of the heart are not concealed, sees that it exists in the recesses of our breast. 2. For the words of the Gospel command that the roots of our vices be cut off rather than the fruits,[37] which will certainly never grow anymore once the shoot has been pulled up. And when they have been pulled up not from the surface of our deeds and actions but from the depths of our thoughts, our mind will then be able to abide in utter patience and holiness. And therefore, in order for murder not to be perpetrated, anger and hatred are cut off; without them the crime of murder can never be committed. For "whoever is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment." And: "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer."[38] 3. In that he desires, namely, to kill him in his heart, even though other human beings have not seen him shed his blood with his own hand or weapon, the Lord, who tenders each person a reward or punishment not only for his accomplished deeds but even for his desires and intentions, declares him a murderer on account of his angry disposition. As he himself says through the prophet: "Their works and their thoughts I am coming to gather

together with all nations and tongues."[39] And again: "Their thoughts within them accusing or defending them, on the day when God will judge the secrets of men."[40]

XXI. It should be known, however, that in those manuscripts where it reads: "Whoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be liable to judgment," the phrase "without cause" is superfluous and was added by persons who did not think that anger needed to be cut off for a just cause, since in fact no one, however irrationally upset he was, would say that he had no cause for anger. It appears, therefore, that this was added by those who did not understand the intention of Scripture, which seeks to cut off completely the growth of anger and to maintain no occasion for indignation whatsoever lest, in ordering us to get angry *with* cause, an occasion for getting angry *without* cause also be offered us. For patience does not achieve its goal in righteous anger; it consists, rather, in not getting angry at all. I know, though, that the phrase "without cause" is interpreted in such a way as to mean that he is angered without cause who, when he is angry, is not allowed to seek revenge. Yet it is better to take it as it is found to be written both in many new manuscripts and in all the old ones.

XXII. Hence it behooves the athlete of Christ, who is contending lawfully, to root out the movements of wrath. The perfect medicine for this disease is that we realize, first, that in no way are we permitted to get angry, whether for an unjust or a just cause, knowing that we shall at once lose the light of discretion and firm and correct counsel, as well as goodness itself and the restraints of righteousness, if the guiding principle of our heart is obscured by darkness; and then, that the purity of our mind will soon be driven out and that it can never become a temple of the Holy Spirit as long as the spirit of wrath dwells in us. Lastly, we should understand that we are never allowed to pray or to make petition to God when we are angry. Above all, we should keep before our eyes the uncertain state of our human condition, daily realizing

that we shall depart from our bodies and that our chaste abstinence, the renunciation of all our property, the contempt of wealth, and the toil of fasting and keeping vigil will confer nothing on us if eternal punishment is being readied for us by the Judge of all on account of wrath and hatred alone.

Textual References

1. Ps 31:9.
2. Eccl 7:10 LXX.
3. Prv 15:1 LXX.
4. Jas 1:20.
5. Prv 11:25 LXX.
6. Prv 14:17 LXX.
7. Prv 29:22 LXX.
8. Ps 106:40.
9. Ps 6:1.
10. Ps 121:4.
11. Ps 44:23.
12. Is 66:1 LXX.
13. Is 40:12.
14. Ps 78:65.
15. 1 Tm 6:16.
16. Cf. Acts 9:15.
17. Eph 4:31.
18. Cf. Mt 7:3–5.
19. Lk 4:23.
20. Cf. Mal 4:2.
21. Ps 4:5a LXX.
22. 2 Sm 23:17.
23. 2 Sm 16:10–12.
24. Ps 4:5b LXX.
25. Eph 4:26.
26. Mal 4:2.

27. Am 8:9.
28. Mt 5:22.
29. Cf. 1 Cor 6:19.
30. Mt 5:23–24.
31. 1 Thes 5:17.
32. 1 Tm 2:8.
33. Lv 19:17.
34. Lv 19:18.
35. Prv 12:28 LXX.
36. Mt 5:8.
37. Cf. Mt 3:10.
38. 1 Jn 3:15.
39. Is 66:18.
40. Rom 2:15–16.

Notes to the Text

8.2ff. The problem of reconciling the passages of Scripture that attest to God's anger with the doctrine of divine immutability and transcendence was one that exercised the ancients, both pagan and Christian. Cf. Erwin F. Micka, *The Problem of Divine Anger in Arnobius and Lactantius* = Studies in Christian Antiquity 4 (Washington, 1943), 1–35. In 8.3f. the issue of divine anger has opened up to that of anthropomorphism, which also arises in *Conlat.* 10.2.2ff. Cf. the beginning of the introduction to *Conlat.* 10 and the note at 10.2.2.

8.4.2 A similar but briefer explanation of some of the bodily parts attributed to God by Scripture occurs in Augustine, *Ep.* 148.4.13, where it is observed that such explanations are commonplaces.

8.4.5 Let it suffice...medicine of salvation are obtained: I.e., all of this has been said so that no one may read Scripture, which is

a source of holiness, immortality, and salvation, in an anthropological way, thus turning it into a source of sickness and death.

8.7ff. That anger may have a good use is consonant with the view expressed in 7.3.2f. Cf. the relevant note.

8.10 Tropical understanding: *Tropicum sensum.* The tropical meaning of Scripture is explained in *Conlat.* 14.8.3 as having a moral thrust.

8.14 The physician of souls: The image of the divine physician was a very popular one in Christian antiquity. Cf. the note at *Conlat.* 2.13.7.

8.18 Knowledge of spiritual mysteries: *Spiritalium sacra-m entorum scientiam.*

On the image of unbridled horses, cf. also 7.8 and the relevant note.

8.19.2 The mention of a pen, a penknife, and a flint provides some insight into the kind of possessions—few in number—that a monk might have.

8.21 The variant "without cause" (ε ' ι κ η) is attested by numerous manuscripts, as a glance at the critical apparatus of a Greek New Testament will demonstrate. Jerome seems to accept the variant in *Ep.* 13. That it may not in fact be an intrusion in the text is argued in David Alan Black, "Jesus on Anger: The Text of Matthew 5:22a Revisited," *Novum Testamentum* 30 (1988): 1–8. Cf. also Weber 60–61.

8.22 On the image of the athlete of Christ, cf. the note at 5.12ff.

NINTH BOOK: THE SPIRIT OF SADNESS

Chapters

I. That the fifth struggle is against the spirit of sadness, and the losses that the mind suffers because of it.

II. How carefully the disease of sadness must be cured.

III. With what the soul that is eaten away by sadness can be compared.

IV. Whence and in what ways sadness arises.

V. That disturbances are aroused in us not by others' but by our own faults.

VI. That no one falls suddenly but that a person who falls perishes gradually, through prolonged heedlessness.

VII. That, in order for perfection to be acquired, the company of the brothers should not be forsaken; rather, patience should continually be cultivated.

VIII. That, if we correct our own behavior, we can get along with everyone.

IX. Concerning another kind of sadness which brings about despair with regard to salvation.

X. The only way in which sadness is beneficial to us.

XI. How it may be discerned which is the sadness that is beneficial and in accordance with God, and which is the one that is diabolical and deadly.

XII. That, apart from that salutary sadness which comes about in three ways, all sadness is to be rejected as harmful.

XIII. The means whereby we can eliminate sadness from our hearts.

I. In the fifth struggle we must restrain the urges of a consuming

sadness. If through separate and random attacks and as a result of fleeting and changing happenstance it has gained control of our soul, it cuts us off totally from the vision of divine contemplation and weakens and oppresses the mind itself, once it has been utterly cast down from the state of purity that it had held to in its entirety. It does not permit it to carry out its prayers with its customary eagerness of heart, nor does it allow it to dwell upon the remedies of the sacred readings. It does not suffer it to be peaceable and gentle with the brothers, makes it impatient and abrupt with regard to every duty of work and worship, and, having destroyed all salutary counsel and driven out steadfastness of heart, crazes as it were and stupefies the intellect, breaking and overwhelming it with a punishing despair.

II. Hence, if we wish to engage lawfully in the struggle of the spiritual contest, we must with no less foresight cure this disease as well. For "as a moth with a garment and a worm with wood, so sadness does harm to a man's heart."1 Quite clearly and appositely has the divine Spirit expressed the force of this hurtful and pernicious vice.

III. For a moth-eaten garment no longer has any value or good use, and likewise worm-eaten wood deserves to be consigned to the flames rather than to be used for furnishing even an insignificant building. In the same way, then, the soul that is eaten away and devoured by sadness is certainly useless for that priestly garment which, according to the prophecy of holy David, is said habitually to receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit, coming down from heaven first to Aaron's beard and then to the edge of his garment. As it says: "Like oil on the head, which ran down to Aaron's beard, which ran down to the edge of his garment."2 Neither can it be part of the structure or furnishing of that spiritual temple whose foundations the wise architect Paul laid when he said: "You are the temple of God"3 and "the Spirit of God dwells in you."4 What its woodwork is like the bride describes in the Song

of Songs when she says: "Our rafters are of cypress, the beams of our houses are of cedar."[5] Hence wood of this sort, which is fragrant and incorruptible and cannot succumb to the decay of age or to being eaten by worms, is selected for the temple of God.

IV. But sometimes it follows upon the vice of anger, which precedes it, or arises out of the desire for some gain that has not been achieved, when a person sees that he has failed in his hope of acquiring the things that his mind was set on. Occasionally we are even provoked to fall into this misfortune for no apparent reason, when we are suddenly weighed down with great sorrow at the instigation of the clever foe, so that we are unable to welcome with our usual courtesy the arrival even of these who are dear to us and our kinfolk, and we consider whatever they say in innocuous conversation to be inappropriate and unnecessary and do not give them a gracious response, since the recesses of our heart are all filled with the gall of bitterness.

V. Hence it is very clear that disturbing urges are not always aroused in us by other people's faults. Rather, we are to blame—we who have stored up within ourselves the causes of our offenses and the seeds of our vices that, when the rain shower of temptation drenches our mind, at once break forth into buds and fruits.

VI. For a person who is irritated by someone else's vices is never compelled to sin if he does not have the stuff of wrongdoing stored away in his heart. Neither should anyone be believed to have been deceived all at once when, upon having seen a woman, he has fallen into an abyss of wicked desire; rather, at the sight there rose to the surface diseases that had been hidden and concealed deep within.

VII. Therefore God, the Creator of all things, knowing better than anyone else how to right his handiwork and that the roots and causes of our offenses lie not in others but in ourselves, commanded that the company of the brothers should not be forsaken and that those persons should not be avoided who have been hurt

by us or by whom we think that we have been offended. Instead he orders that they be won over, for he knows that perfection of heart is attained not by separation from human beings but by the virtue of patience. When this is firmly possessed it can keep us at peace even with those who hate peace. By the same token, if it has not been acquired, we find ourselves constantly at odds even with those who are perfect and better than us. For occasions of irritation, on account of which we strive to flee from those to whom we are joined, can never be missing from human affairs, and therefore we do not escape from but only change the causes of sadness because of which we have separated ourselves from our former companions.

VIII. And so it is incumbent upon us to strive, rather, to correct our faults and to improve our behavior. Without a doubt, once these have been set straight, we shall get along very well even with wild animals and beasts, to say nothing of human beings. This is in accordance with what is said in the book of blessed Job: "Wild beasts will be at peace with you."[6] We shall not fear offenses coming from without, nor shall any stumbling blocks from outside be able to have an effect on us, if their roots have not been let in and planted within us. For "there is much peace for those who love your name, and for them there is no stumbling block."[7]

IX. There is another kind of sadness as well, which is more detestable. It inspires in the wrongdoer not amendment of life or correction of vice but the most pernicious despair of soul. It did not cause Cain to repent after his brother's murder[8] or Judas to hasten to healing and reparation after the betrayal; instead it drew him to hang himself with a noose in his despair.[9]

X. Hence sadness is to be judged beneficial for us in one instance alone—when we conceive it out of repentance for our sins and are inflamed by a desire for perfection, and by the contemplation of future blessedness. Of this the blessed Apostle himself says: "The sadness that is in accordance with God works repentance unto a

lasting salvation, but the world's sadness works death."[10]

XI. The sadness that "works repentance unto a lasting salvation," likewise, is obedient, courteous, humble, mild, gracious, and patient, inasmuch as it comes from the love of God. It stretches itself out tirelessly, in its desire for perfection, to every bodily pain and to contrition of spirit. With a kind of joy, and quickened by the hope of its own progress, it retains all its gracious courtesy and forbearance, having in itself all the fruits of the Holy Spirit, which the same Apostle enumerates: "The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, forbearance, goodness, kindness, faith, mildness, continence."[11] But the other is very harsh, impatient, rough, full of rancor and barren grief and punishing despair, crushing the one whom it has embraced and drawing him away from any effort and from salutary sorrow, since it is irrational. Too, it not only removes the efficacy of prayer but also eliminates all the spiritual fruits that we have spoken of and that the first is capable of bestowing.

XII. Hence, apart from that which is taken up for the sake of a salutary repentance or in the pursuit of perfection or out of a desire for things to come, all sadness is to be equally rejected as this-worldly and death-dealing, and it is to be immediately cast out from our hearts, just like the spirit of fornication or avarice or anger.

XIII. We shall, therefore, be able to expel this most pernicious passion from ourselves once our mind is occupied constantly with spiritual meditation; then we may raise it up with a hope of things to come and by contemplation of promised blessedness. For we shall be able to overcome every kind of sadness—whether that which derives from previous anger, or that which befalls us when a loss of money or some other disadvantage strikes us, or that which occurs when some injury has been inflicted on us, or that which proceeds from an irrational turn of mind, or that which brings upon us a deadly despair—when we are ever rejoicing at the sight

of things eternal and to come and when we remain steadfast and are neither cast down by present events nor carried away by good fortune, viewing both as empty and soon to pass.

Textual References

1. Prv 25:20.
2. Ps 133:2.
3. 2 Cor 6:16.
4. 1 Cor 3:16.
5. Sg 1:16 LXX.
6. Jb 5:23 LXX.
7. Ps 119:165.
8. Cf. Gn 4:8.
9. Cf. Mt 27:5.
10. 2 Cor 7:10.
11. Gal 5:22–23.

Notes to the Text

9.1 For the Evagrian parallel to the notion that sadness prevents a person from praying with eagerness, cf. Weber 58.

9.5 The image of a rain shower of temptation leading to the production of buds and fruits of vice is an unusual one. With its tone of vivification, it seems to belong in a context of virtue rather than of vice.

"The sacred readings" doubtlessly refers to Scripture.

9.6 That open sin is preceded by and symptomatic of hidden sin is an idea that is also found in Origen, *De orat.* 29.18; Augustine, *De civ. Dei* 14.13. It is suggested as well in Ephrem, *Hymni de paradis o* 3.4.

9.8 Getting along with wild animals is a not uncharacteristic

attribute of the early desert dwellers. It implies the regaining of the paradisal state that was typified by coexistence with and mastery over the animal world, as noted in Gn 1:26, 28; 2:19–20. Cf. Athanasius, *V. S. Antonii* 50f.; Sulpicius Severus, *Dial.* 1.13; *Hist. monach. in Aegypto* 21.15f.

9.13 The concluding words pose an ideal of equanimity and imperturbability that is also discussed in *Conlat.* 6.9.3 and that has visible effects. Cf. the relevant note.

TENTH BOOK: THE SPIRIT OF ACEDIA

Chapters

I. That the sixth struggle is against the spirit of acedia, and on its nature.

II. A description of acedia, and how it lurks in the heart of the monk, and what losses it inflicts on the mind.

III. In what ways acedia may overcome a monk.

IV. That acedia prevents the mind from contemplating any of the virtues.

V. That the attack of acedia is twofold.

VI. To what extent those who have begun to be overcome by acedia collapse.

VII. Texts of the Apostle against the spirit of acedia.

VIII. That he who will not be satisfied with manual labor is inevitably disquieted.

IX. That not only the Apostle but also those who were with him engaged in manual labor.

X. That the Apostle engaged in manual labor in order to give us an example of work.

XI. That he preached and taught about work not only by example but also in words.

XII. Concerning what is said: "If anyone does not want to work, neither may he eat."

XIII. Concerning what is said: "We have heard that some of you are walking in disquietude."

XIV. That manual labor eliminates many vices.

XV. That hospitality is to be shown even to the lazy and the careless.

XVI. That we should correct, out of love rather than out of hatred, those who stray.

XVII. Different texts on the subject of the Apostle's command to work and showing that he himself worked.

XVIII. That what the Apostle gained by his work was sufficient not only for himself alone but also for those who were with him.

XIX. How this should be understood: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

XX. On the lazy brother who urged others to leave the cenobium.

XXI. Different texts of Solomon against acedia.

XXII. That throughout Egypt the brothers engage in manual labor in such a way as not only to meet their own needs but also to minister to those in prison.

XXIII. That as a result of laziness there are no cenobia for monks in the regions of the West.

XXIV. On Abba Paul, who each year burned up all his handiwork.

XXV. The words of Abba Moses that he gave me on the cure for acedia.

I. Our sixth struggle is what the Greeks call ἀκηδία, which we can refer to as a wearied or anxious heart. It is akin to sadness and is the peculiar lot of solitaries and a particularly dangerous and frequent foe of those dwelling in the desert. It disturbs the monk especially around the sixth hour, rushing in upon him like a kind of fever at just this time and inflicting upon the enfeebled soul the most burning heat of its attacks at regular and set intervals. Some of the elders declare that this is the noonday demon that is mentioned in the ninetieth psalm.[1]

II. 1. Once this has seized possession of a wretched mind it makes a person horrified at where he is, disgusted with his cell,

and also disdainful and contemptuous of the brothers who live with him or at a slight distance, as being careless and unspiritual. Likewise it renders him slothful and immobile in the face of all the work to be done within the walls of his dwelling: It does not allow him to stay still in his cell or to devote any effort to reading. He groans quite frequently that spending such a long time there is of no profit to him and that he will possess no spiritual fruit for as long as he is attached to that group of people. He complains and sighs, lamenting that he is bereft and void of all spiritual gain in that place inasmuch as, even though he is capable of directing others and of being useful to many, he is edifying no one and being of no help to anyone through his instruction and teaching. 2. He makes a great deal of far-off and distant monasteries, describing such places as more suited to progress and more conducive to salvation, and also depicting the fellowship of the brothers there as pleasant and of an utterly spiritual cast. Everything that lies at hand, on the contrary, is harsh, and not only is there nothing edifying among the brothers who dwell there but in fact there are not even any of the necessities of life to be obtained there without a huge effort. Thereupon he says that he cannot be saved if he remains in that place. He must leave his cell and get away from it as quickly as he can, for he will perish if he stays in it any longer. 3. Then the fifth and sixth hours arouse such bodily listlessness and such a yearning for food that he feels as worn out as if he had been exhausted by a long journey and very heavy labor or as if he had put off eating for the sake of a two- or three-day fast. Next he glances around anxiously here and there and sighs that none of the brothers is coming to see him. Constantly in and out of his cell, he looks at the sun as if it were too slow in setting. So filled is he with a kind of irrational confusion of mind, like a foul mist, and so disengaged and blank has he become with respect to any spiritual activity that he thinks that no other remedy for such an attack can be found than the visit of a brother or the solace of sleep alone. 4. With that the same malady suggests that he should dutifully pay

his respects to the brothers and visit the sick, whether at a slight distance or further away. It also prescribes certain pious and religious tasks: Those relatives male and female should be looked after, and he should hasten to bring his greetings to them more often; it would be a great and pious work to make frequent visits to that religious woman who is vowed to God and who, in particular, is totally deprived of her relatives' support, and a very holy thing to bring whatever might be necessary to one who was abandoned and disdained by her own relatives. On such things it behooves him to expend his pious efforts rather than to remain, barren and having made no progress, in his cell.

III. And so the unhappy soul, preyed upon by devices like these of the enemy, is agitated until, worn out by the spirit of acedia as by the most powerful battering ram, it either learns to succumb to sleep or shakes off the restraints of the cell and gets in the habit of finding its consolation in the face of this onslaught by visiting a brother, although it will be all the more painfully vulnerable not long after having used this remedy as a stopgap. For the adversary will the more frequently and harshly try a person who he knows, once the battle is joined, will immediately offer him his back and who he sees hopes for safety not in victory or in struggle but in flight, until he is gradually drawn out of his cell and begins to forget the reason for his profession, which is nothing other than the vision and contemplation of that divine purity which is more excellent than anything else and which can be acquired only by silence, by remaining constantly in one's cell, and by meditation. Thus it is that the soldier of Christ, having become a fugitive and a deserter from his army, "entangles himself in worldly affairs" and displeases "him to whom he engaged himself."2

IV. In one verse blessed David beautifully expressed all the misfortunes of this disease, when he said: "My soul slept from weariness"3—that is, from acedia. Quite correctly did he say that not the body but the soul slept. For, indeed, the soul that has been

wounded by the weapon of this disturbance is asleep with regard to any contemplation of virtue and any insight provided by the spiritual senses.

V. And so the true athlete of Christ, who wishes to engage lawfully in the struggle for perfection, must strive to cast out this disease as well from the depths of his soul, and he must also contend on both sides against this most wicked spirit of acedia in such a way as neither to be cut down by the sword of sleep and collapse nor to be driven out from the bulwark of the monastery and depart in flight, even for a seemingly pious reason.

VI. For the person whom it has begun to conquer, to whatever degree, it either allows to stay in his cell without any spiritual progress, in as it were a state of inactivity and surrender, or drives him out from there and makes him, in addition, unstable and feckless. It also causes him to be slothful when it comes to any kind of work and to go around constantly to the cells and monasteries of the brothers with no other reason than somewhere or somehow to discover something to eat. For the mind of the indolent knows how to think of nothing but food and the belly until, having at some time or other made friends with a man or woman equally sluggish and lukewarm, it gets entangled in their affairs and business and gradually finds itself so entrapped in their harmful concerns that it is as it were bound by serpentine coils and from then on can never free itself for the sake of the perfection of its former profession.

VII. 1. The blessed Apostle, like a true and spiritual physician, long ago saw this malady, which springs from the spirit of acedia, creeping in, or else he foresaw, thanks to a revelation of the Holy Spirit, that it would arise, and he hastens to head it off with the health-giving remedies of his precepts. For in writing to the Thessalonians he first, like a very skilled and accomplished physician, applies the mild and soothing lotion of his words to his patients' diseased place and, beginning with love, praises them in

that regard, until the deadly wound, soothed with gentler medication, can more easily sustain harsher remedies, once the angry swelling has gone down. Thus he says: "Of the love of the brotherhood we have no need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another. For this you do to all the brothers throughout Macedonia."4 2. First he produced soothing lotions of praise, stilling their ears and preparing them for the cure of the health-giving word. Thereupon he continues: "But we ask you, brothers, to abound the more."5 Thus far he strokes them with mild and soothing words, lest perchance he find them not yet ready to receive a complete cure. What do you ask, Apostle? In what should they abound the more? Namely, in that love of which he had said earlier: "Of the love of the brotherhood we have no need to write to you." And why do you need to tell them "but we ask you to abound the more" when in fact they do not need to have anything written to them on this matter? Especially is this the case inasmuch as you give the reason why they do not need this when you say: "You yourselves have been taught by God to love one another," and when you add something greater in the third place, that not only have they been taught by God but also that they are fulfilling in deed what they have been taught. "For," he says, "this you do" not to one or two but "to all the brothers," and not merely among your own fellow citizens and acquaintances but "throughout Macedonia." 3. Tell me, then, why do you make such a point of saying these things first? Again he continues: "But we ask you, brothers, to abound the more." And finally and with difficulty he breaks out into what he had previously been down-playing: "And that you make an effort to be quiet."6 He gave his first concern, and then he adds a second: "And to pursue your own affairs."7 A third as well: "And work with your own hands, as we commanded you."8 A fourth: "And walk honorably for the sake of outsiders."9 And a fifth: "And desire nothing of anyone."10 See with what hesitation, expressed with so many preliminaries, he put off what we know was on his mind. "And that you make an

effort to be quiet." This means that, as you stay in your cells, you are not to be disquieted by the different rumors that usually arise from the wishes and gossip of idle folk, thus bringing disquietude to others. 4. "And to pursue your own affairs." This means that you must not wish, out of curiosity, to inquire into the deeds of the world or wish, while looking into other people's ways of life, to expend your efforts not on your own improvement and on the pursuit of virtue but rather on calumniating your brothers. "And work with your own hands, as we commanded you." Lest those things occur that he had warned previously should not occur—namely, that they be disquieted or concerned about other people's affairs or not walk honorably for the sake of outsiders or desire something of someone else—he now continues with the words: "And work with your own hands, as we commanded you." 5. For he clearly showed that idleness is the reason why those things happen that he had previously censured. For a person cannot be disquieted or concerned about other people's affairs if he is satisfied with concentrating on the work of his own hands. He refers to a fourth disease as well, which springs from this very idleness, namely that they should not walk dishonorably, when he says: "And walk honorably for the sake of outsiders." Never can a person go about honorably, and certainly not among those who belong to the world, if he is not content to cling to the restrictions of his cell and to manual labor. He will, instead, inevitably be dishonorable in his search for the necessities of life, giving himself to flattery, pursuing the latest tales, and seeking opportunities for connections and gossip, thus preparing for himself the means of entry and the wherewithal for getting into other people's homes. 6. "And desire nothing of anyone." He who does not delight in providing for his daily bread by the devout and quiet effort of his own toil is unable not to yearn for other people's gifts and offices.

You see how many conditions sprout from one disgraceful vice, and how serious and wicked they are.

Finally, those very people whom in his first letter he had encouraged with pleasant and flattering words he tries in his second one to cure with certain harsher and more burning medicines, since they had not responded to milder remedies. No longer does he first apply the lotions of soothing words or speak gently and softly, as when he says: "But we ask you, brothers." Rather: "We command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly."11 7. In the one he asks, in the other he commands; in the one there is a sentiment of mildness, in the other the severity of adjuration and threat. "We command you, brothers." For, when we first asked you, you disdained to listen, but now at least obey our commands. He makes this commandment terrible not by relying on commonplace expressions but by an adjuration in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, lest perchance they once again despise simple utterance as human speech and not think it very important to observe. Immediately, like a very skilled physician who had been unable to bring relief to diseased members by his use of soothing medication, he sets out to heal them with an incision by the spiritual knife, and he says: "Withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition that they received from us."12 8. And so, he orders that those who do not wish to give themselves to work be withdrawn from and be cut off as members corrupted by the gangrene of idleness. Otherwise the disease of sloth, like some deadly contagion, may corrupt even healthy members with its creeping infectiousness. And as he is on the point of speaking about those who do not want to work with their hands or to eat their bread in silence, whom he has also ordered to be withdrawn from, listen to how he burns them with reproaches from the start. First he says that they are disorderly and that they do not walk according to his tradition; in other words he calls them stubborn for being unwilling to proceed according to his teaching. He also refers to them as dishonorable—that is, not keeping to the appropriate and proper time for going

out, for visiting, and for speaking. For a disorderly person is inevitably subject to all these vices. 9. “And not according to the tradition that they received from us.” Here he observes that they are in a certain sense rebellious and contemptuous because they disdain to keep the tradition that they received from him and are unwilling to imitate what they not only remember that their teacher taught in words but also realize that he carried out in act. “For you yourselves know how you should imitate us.”13 He heaps up a huge amount of blame when he asserts that they did not observe what was within their recollection and what they had not only learned to imitate through verbal instruction but had even taken in by way of the inspiriting example of deeds.

VIII. 1. “Because we were not disquieted among you.”14 When he wants to prove that he was not disquieted among them, thanks to his exercise of work, he notes with clarity that those who do not want to work are always disquieted by the vice of idleness. “Nor did we eat anyone’s bread for free.”15 With each word the teacher of the Gentiles pursues his rebuke still further. The preacher of the Gospel says that he has not eaten anyone’s bread for free, since he was aware that the Lord had commanded that “those who proclaim the Gospel should live by the Gospel.”16 And again: “The laborer is worthy of his food.”17 2. Since, indeed, he who preached the Gospel and performed such a sublime and spiritual labor did not, basing himself on the authority of the Lord’s command, presume to take food for himself for free, what are we to do—we who have not only not been entrusted with any preaching of the word but have not even been ordered to care for anything apart from our own souls alone? With what confidence shall we dare, with idle hands, to eat bread for free that the vessel of election,18 pressed upon by his gospel cares and preaching, did not presume to eat without having engaged in manual labor? As he says: “But we worked night and day, in labor and weariness, so as not to be a burden to any of you.”19 3. He continues to add to his pile of reproaches. For he did not simply say: “We did not eat for free the

bread of any one of you" and leave it at that, for this might have made it look as if he had been supported by his own or others' private purse and hidden funds, although not by their collections and gifts. "But," he says, "we worked night and day in labor and weariness." That is, we were specifically supported by our own work. And this, he says, we did not do in conformity to our own desire or for pleasure's sake, as bodily rest and exercise might suggest, but as the need for sustenance and the lack of it obliged us to do—not without great bodily weariness. For not only throughout the whole day but even throughout the night, which seems to have been given for bodily repose, I stuck unremittingly to manual labor out of concern for my food.

IX. And he testifies that he was not the only one who lived like this among them, lest perchance this pattern not seem important and normative if it were set forth as his example alone. He declares, rather, that all those who were deputed along with him for the ministry of the Gospel—that is, Silvanus and Timothy, who wrote these same things with him20—worked in similar fashion. Inasmuch as he also says: "Lest we burden any of you," he inflicts them with heavy shame. For if he who preached the Gospel and commended it with signs and wonders did not dare to eat bread for free lest he burden anyone, how can those people who presume to do so daily, in idleness and sloth, not think that they are burdensome?

X. "Not as if we did not have the right, but in order to make ourselves an example to you, so that you might imitate us."21 He gives the reason why he has imposed so much labor on himself—"in order," as he says, "to make ourselves an example to you, so that you might imitate us," so that, if perchance you forgot the oral teaching that you frequently took in with your ears, you would at least remember examples of this way of life that came to you through your trustworthy eyes. It is no slight rebuke to them either, when he says that he endured this labor and bodily weari-

ness day and night for no other reason than as an example, and that they for whom he had imposed such weariness upon himself, although he did not need to do so, were nonetheless unwilling to be instructed. And indeed, he says, although we had the right, and the property and resources of all of you were at our disposal, and I knew that I had our Lord's permission to make use of them, I still did not exercise that right lest what I did properly and legitimately would have given others an example of harmful idleness. And hence, as I preached the Gospel, I preferred to support myself with my own hands and by my own labor, so as to open the way of perfection to those of you who also wanted to proceed along the path of virtue and to offer an exemplary way of life through my own toil.

XI. But lest perchance it seem that he had worked in silence, wishing to teach them by example, and that they had not been instructed by the advice of his precepts, he goes on and says: "For when we were with you we declared to you that, if anyone does not want to work, neither may he eat."22 He continues to emphasize the laziness of those who, although they know that he is a good teacher by reason of his teaching and instruction, disdain to imitate him when he engages in manual labor, and he also emphasizes diligence and heedfulness by saying that not only had he given this to them as an example when he was present but also that he had constantly proclaimed orally that "if anyone does not want to work, neither may he eat."

XII. No longer does he offer them advice as would a teacher or a physician. Instead he inveighs against them with the severity of a judicial pronouncement and, having resumed his apostolic authority, passes sentence on his disdainers as from the judgment seat—namely, with that authority which, when he was writing threateningly to the Corinthians, he asserted was given him by the Lord. At that time he warned them that they were in sin so that they would make an effort to correct themselves before his arrival,

and he ordered thus: “I beseech you lest, when I am present, I be obliged to be bold with certain persons with that authority which was given me in your regard.”23 And again: “For if I wished to boast somewhat of the authority that the Lord has given me for your upbuilding and not for your destruction, I would not be ashamed.”24 With that authority, I say, he declares: “If anyone does not want to work, neither may he eat.” He does not condemn them to the fleshly sword; rather he forbids them sustenance for this life by the authority of the Holy Spirit so that, if perchance they are not thinking about the punishment of future death and wish to continue stubbornly in their love of idleness, they will at least be constrained by nature’s needs and by a fear of present ruin and find themselves obliged to accept his salutary precepts.

XIII. And so, after such harsh gospel rigor, he finally explains why he had said all this: “For we hear that some of you are walking in disquietude, not working but acting as busybodies.”25 Nowhere is he satisfied to declare that those who are unwilling to devote themselves to work have been affected by only one disease. For in his first letter he says that they are disorderly and not walking according to the tradition that they received from him, and he also describes them as disquieted and as eating bread for free. Again he says here: “We hear that some of you are walking in disquietude.” And he at once adds a second malady, which lies at the root of this disquietude: “not working,” and a third disease as well, which springs from this like a kind of shoot: “but acting as busybodies.”

XIV. With this, now, he hastens to apply the appropriate remedy to the root cause of so many vices. Laying aside that apostolic authority which he had used shortly before, he reverts once more to the compassionate attitude of a loving father or a kind physician, and by his healthful counsel he offers them salutary medication as if they were his children or his patients, saying: “We charge those who are such and beseech them in the Lord Jesus to work in silence and to eat their own bread.”26 Like the most

skilled physician, with a single healthful precept about work he has cured the causes of so many hurts that spring from the root of idleness, knowing that other maladies, too, that rise from the same soil will be destroyed as soon as the source of the initial disease has been removed.

XV. Yet, like a very far-sighted and prudent physician, he not only wishes to cure the ailments of the sick but also, and in similar fashion, offers appropriate precepts to the well whereby their health can be lastingly maintained. As he says: "But you do not grow weary of doing good."[27] You who follow us—that is, our ways—and who imitate the example of work that was given you and in no respect follow the laziness and sloth of those others "do not grow weary of doing good"—that is, you likewise show your kindness to them if they have perchance neglected to observe what we said. As he had castigated those who were sick, lest they give in to idleness and spend themselves in disquietude and meddling, so also he admonishes those who are well not to refuse the former that kindness which we are ordered by the Lord's precept to show to good and bad,[28] even if some of the wicked do not want to turn to sound teaching, and not to cease doing good and encouraging them, as much with words of consolation and correction as with the usual civilities and kindness.

XVI. Once more, though, lest perchance some were stirred by this mildness to disdain to obey his precepts, he mixes in apostolic severity: "But if anyone does not obey our word by this letter, take note of him and do not mingle with him, so that he may be ashamed."[29] And, for the sake of his own respect and for the common good, having warned them as to what should be observed and how carefully they should keep the apostolic commands, he thereupon adds the mildness of a most indulgent father and also teaches them, like his sons, what a brotherly disposition they should maintain, for love's sake, in regard to the aforementioned persons: "Do not think of him as an enemy but correct him as a

brother."[30] Into his judicial severity he has mixed fatherly love, and his sentence uttered with apostolic firmness he has tempered with kindly graciousness. For he orders that the person who disdains to obey his precepts should be taken note of, and that he should not be mingled with, and yet he does not command that these things be done out of the vice of hatred but with a view to brotherly love and to such persons' amendment. "Do not," he says, "mingle with him, so that he may be ashamed," so that he who has not been corrected by my lenient precepts may at least be ashamed by being publicly cut off from all of you and may eventually begin to return to the path of salvation.

XVII. In the Letter to the Ephesians, too, he issues a command about work of this kind when he says: "The person who used to steal should steal no longer; instead, let him toil in working what is good with his hands, so that he may have the wherewithal to give to those in need."[31]

In the Acts of the Apostles as well we find in similar fashion that he not only taught these things but also bore them out in work. For when he came to Corinth he did not allow himself to stay anywhere else than with Aquila and Priscilla, because they were engaged in the same trade that he was accustomed to practice. Thus you have it: "After this Paul left Athens and came to Corinth. And having found there a certain Jew by the name of Aquila, a native of Pontus, and his wife Priscilla, he went to them, because they had the same trade, and he stayed with them and worked; for they were tent-makers by trade."[32]

XVIII. Then he went on to Miletus, and from there he sent to Ephesus and called to himself the elders of the church of the Ephesians. And, giving them precepts as to how they should rule the Church of God in his absence, he said: "I have not desired anyone's silver and gold. You yourselves know that these hands have labored for my needs and for the needs of those who are with me. I have shown you everything—how, working in this way, you

should support the weak and be mindful of the Lord Jesus' words, because he himself said: It is more blessed to give than to receive."[33] He left us an imposing example of his way of life when he testified that he not only worked for what met his bodily needs alone but was also able to take care of the requirements of those who were with him—those, namely, who were taken up every day with necessary obligations and could not likewise procure their livelihood with their own hands. And just as he told the Thessalonians that he worked, in order to give them an example for imitating him, so here he did something similar when he said: "I have shown you everything—how, working in this way, you should support the weak"—namely, in mind and in body. This means that we should strive to care for them by our own toil and by obtaining the necessary money through our own effort, rather than from a vast reserve or from a sum that has been stored up, and certainly not from others' generosity and property.

XIX. And he says that this very command is from the Lord. As he states: "Because he himself said" (that is, the Lord Jesus): "It is more blessed to give than to receive." More blessed than the poverty of the receiver is this generosity of the giver, which does not come from money that has been stored up through lack of faith or confidence, and which is not dispensed from the accumulated hoards of avarice, but which is offered from the fruit of one's own work and from loving toil. And "it is more blessed to give than to receive" because, although the person who has given may be as poor as the one who receives, he nonetheless strives by his own effort to procure not only a sufficiency for his own needs but also, with loving solicitude, something to give to the needy. In this way he is adorned with a twofold grace, both because he possesses the perfect poverty of Christ through his renunciation of all his goods and because by his labors and his disposition he exhibits the liberality of a rich man. He it is who honors God from his righteous labors and gives to him from the fruits of his righteousness.[34] But the other, who is enervated by the torpor and inactivity of idle-

ness, proves by the Apostle's words that he is even unworthy of food because he dares, in his idleness, to go against his prohibition, which he does as one guilty of sinful stubbornness.

XX. We knew a brother whose name we would mention if it were more instructive. He lived in a cenobium and was bound to give the bursar every day the fee that he had earned for his labor. Yet, lest he be drawn into more work or be embarrassed by the example of someone who was toiling harder, whenever he saw a brother enter the cenobium who wished, in his ardent faith, to take on a greater amount of work, he would—if he were unable to dissuade him from an intention of this sort by surreptitious arguments—persuade him to leave the place with wicked advice and whisperings. And in order to get rid of him the more easily, he would make believe that he had been mistreated in many ways and over a long period of time and that he too wanted to leave, if only he could find an easy route and a good companion. And when he got him to consent, as a result of his clandestine disparagements of the monastery, and they agreed on the time when he should leave the monastery and on the place where he would wait, since the other was going to precede him, he himself, although looking as if he were going to follow soon after, stayed behind. The other, out of shame at his departure, would not dare to return to the monastery from which he had fled, and the one who had seduced him into flight would remain in the cenobium. Let this one example of this kind of person serve as a precaution for beginners and show more clearly how many evils idleness begets in the mind of the monk, according to the words of Scripture,35 and how "evil communications corrupt good manners."36

XXI. 1. Even the most wise Solomon speaks very clearly of the vice of idleness in numerous places. As he says: "The one who pursues idleness shall be filled with poverty,"37 both visible and invisible, on account of which the idle person is inevitably caught up in different vices and ever removed from the contemplation of

God and from those spiritual riches of which the blessed Apostle speaks: "In all things you were made rich in him—in all speech and in all knowledge."[38] The idler's poverty is also described elsewhere as follows: "Every slothful person shall be clothed in torn garments and rags."[39] 2. For without a doubt he will not deserve to be adorned with the garment of incorruption (concerning which the Apostle commanded: "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ";[40] and again: "Clothed in the breastplate of righteousness and love";[41] and about which the Lord himself said to Jerusalem through the prophet: "Rise up, rise up, Jerusalem, put on the garments of your glory"[42]) who has been overcome by slumbering idleness and acedia and who has chosen to be clothed not by the effort of his own toil but in the rags of laziness, which he has cut off from the complete fullness of the Scriptures and from their body and which he refits into a disgraceful covering to hide his slothfulness rather than into a garment of glory and beauty. 3. For persons who have grown remiss as a result of sluggishness and who are unwilling to support themselves by manual labor, which the Apostle exercised ceaselessly and commanded us to exercise, are in the habit of using certain texts of Scripture as a kind of veil to cover up their inactivity, saying that it is written: "Work not for food that perishes but for that which endures unto eternal life."[43] And: "My food is to do the will of my Father."[44] 4. But these texts are a kind of rag taken from the solid fullness of the Gospel, and they are sewn together for the purpose of covering over the disgrace of our idleness and shame rather than for warming and clothing us with that precious and perfect garment of virtue which that wise woman in Proverbs, who is clothed in strength and beauty, is described as having made for both herself and her husband. Of her it suitably says: "She is clothed in strength and beauty, and she rejoices in the latter days."[45] The same Solomon, again, speaks thus of the disease of inactivity: "The ways of those who do nothing are strewn with thorns"[46]—namely, with the vices (and others like them) that the Apostle said above spring from

idleness. And again: “Every idle person is full of desires,”47 concerning which the Apostle says: “Desire nothing of anyone.” And finally: “Idleness has taught many evils.”48 5. These the Apostle enumerated clearly in what we exposed above when he said: “Not working but acting as busybodies.” And to this vice he added something else: “That you make an effort to be quiet.” And then: “And to pursue your own affairs, and walk honorably for the sake of outsiders, and desire nothing of anyone.” He observes that some are even disorderly and rebellious, and he commands those who are zealous to keep away from them when he says: “Withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition that they received from us.”

XXII. And so, instructed by these examples, the fathers throughout Egypt in no way permit monks, and especially the young men, to be idle. They measure the state of their heart and their progress in patience and humility by their eagerness to work. Not only do they not allow them to accept any of their sustenance from anybody else, but from their own toil they also take care of brothers who are visiting and who are from afar, and they even collect and distribute an immense quantity of provisions and food to places in Libya that suffer from barrenness and hunger as well as to cities where people are languishing in squalid prisons, in the belief that they are presenting a spiritual and true sacrifice to the Lord, from the fruit of their hands, by way of this kind of offering.

XXIII. This is why in these regions we do not see any established monasteries with such a throng of brothers, because, inasmuch as they are not supported by the proceeds of their own toil, they cannot remain in them constantly. And even if sufficient provisions can somehow be supplied them through another person’s generosity, still the pleasure that they take in idleness and their wandering hearts do not allow them to remain for very long in one spot. This is at the origin of the holy saying that comes from the ancient fathers of Egypt, that a monk who is working is struck

by one demon, whereas an idler is destroyed by innumerable spirits.

XXIV. Lastly, consider Abba Paul, one of the most upright of the fathers. He lived in the vast desert known as Porphyrion, was free of care by reason of his date palms and little garden, had enough provisions and a quantity of food, and could not do any other work to support himself because his dwelling was separated from towns and from habitable land by a seven days' journey through the desert, or even longer, and transportation cost more than he could get for the work that he did. He used to collect palm fronds and always exact a day's labor from himself just as if this were his means of support. And when his cave was filled with a whole year's work, he would burn up what he had so carefully toiled over each year, to that extent proving that without manual labor a monk can neither stay in one spot nor ever mount to the summit of perfection. And so, although the obligation of earning a livelihood did not demand this course of action, he did it just for the sake of purging his heart, firming his thoughts, persevering in his cell, and conquering and driving out acedia.

XXV. When I was starting to dwell in the desert and had told Abba Moses, the highest of all the holy ones, that the previous day I had been very seriously troubled by the malady of acedia and that I had been unable to free myself from it except by running at once to Abba Paul, he said: "You did not free yourself from it; instead, you surrendered and subjected yourself to it all the more. For the adversary will fight you even more strenuously as soon as he sees that you are a deserter and a fugitive and that you have fled defeated from the conflict, unless you join in the fray once again and learn to triumph by endurance and by doing battle instead of choosing to dissipate its passions, when they assail you, by deserting your cell or by torpid sleep." Hence experience proves that an onslaught of acedia must not be avoided by flight but overcome through resistance.

Textual References

1. Cf. Ps 91:6.
2. 2 Tm 2:4.
3. Ps 119:28.
4. 1 Thes 4:9–10a.
5. 1 Thes 4:10b.
6. 1 Thes 4:11a.
7. 1 Thes 4:11b.
8. 1 Thes 4:11c.
9. 1 Thes 4:11d.
10. 1 Thes 4:11e.
11. 2 Thes 3:6a.
12. 2 Thes 3:6b.
13. 2 Thes 3:7a.
14. 2 Thes 3:7b.
15. 2 Thes 3:8a.
16. 1 Cor 9:14.
17. Mt 10:10.
18. Cf. Acts 9:15.
19. 2 Thes 3:8b.
20. Cf. 2 Thes 1:1.
21. 2 Thes 3:9.
22. 2 Thes 3:10.
23. 2 Cor 10:2.
24. 2 Cor 10:8.
25. 2 Thes 3:11.
26. 2 Thes 3:12.
27. 2 Thes 3:13.
28. Cf. Mt 5:43–45.
29. 2 Thes 3:14.
30. 2 Thes 3:15.
31. Eph 4:28.
32. Acts 18:1–3.

33. Acts 20:33–35.
34. Cf. Prv 3:9 LXX.
35. Cf. Sir 33:28.
36. 1 Cor 15:33.
37. Prv 28:19.
38. 1 Cor 1:5.
39. Prv 23:21 LXX.
40. Rom 13:14.
41. 1 Thes 5:8.
42. Is 52:1.
43. Jn 6:27.
44. Jn 4:34.
45. Prv 31:25 LXX.
46. Prv 15:19 LXX.
47. Prv 13:4 LXX.
48. Sir 33:28.

Notes to the Text

10.1ff. For the various instances of Cassian's dependence on Evagrius throughout this book cf. Weber 82–83.

10.1 That the noonday demon of Ps 91:6 is acedia appears in Origen, *Frag. in Ps.* 90.6 (PG 12.1552); Athanasius, *Exp. in Ps.* 90.6 (PG 27.401); Evagrius, *Prac.* 12.

10.5 On the image of the athlete of Christ, cf. the note at 5.12ff.

10.6 "Monasteries" are perhaps understood here as referring to dwellings for individual monks. Cf. *Conlat.* 18.10 and the relevant note.

10.7ff. The image of Paul as a physician, which is continued throughout these pages, is not an unusual one. Cf. Chrysostom, *Serm. in Eph. 14 ad 4.27;* idem, *De laudibus Pauli* 5.7,

7.11.

10.7.5 Disquieted...not satisfied: *Inquietus...non adquiescit.*

10.7.6ff. 2 Thes 3:6ff., which begins to be cited at this point on behalf of monastic manual labor, is also liberally quoted to the same end in Augustine, *De op. monach.* 4ff.

10.8.2 We who have not only not been entrusted with any preaching of the word...: Cassian possibly intends a contrast here not only between the monk and Saint Paul but also between the monk and the ordained clergy, whose chief mission consists in preaching and the care of souls.

10.13 The reference to "his first letter" (1 Thes) is in fact a mistake. The words about disorderliness and not walking according to the tradition are found in 2 Thes 3:6.

10.22 Monastic almsgiving of the sort described here is also mentioned in *Conlat.* 18.7.6. Cf. likewise Augustine, *De mor. cath. eccl.* 31.67.

10.23 "In these regions" refers of course to Gaul, in contrast to Egypt. Cassian indicates that the monks of Gaul are supported by others rather than by themselves, a situation that he deplores. Cf. Stewart 17.

The origin of "the holy saying" is unknown.

10.24 Abba Paul, who is mentioned here and who reappears in 10.25, may be identical with the Paul who is spoken of in connection with Abba Moses in *Conlat.* 7.26.2. Cf. the relevant note.

Porphyrion is also known as Calamus. Cf. the note at *Conlat.* 3.5.2.

10.25 The Abba Moses who is mentioned here is perhaps the

same as the one around whom *Conlat.* 1–2 is constructed.

ELEVENTH BOOK: THE SPIRIT OF VAINGLORY

Chapters

I. That the seventh struggle is against vainglory, and on its nature.

II. That vainglory strikes a monk not only in his carnal but in his spiritual part as well.

III. That vainglory is multifarious and multiform.

IV. How vainglory attacks a monk from the right and from the left.

V. By what comparison the nature of vainglory may be demonstrated.

VI. That vainglory is not extinguished by the benefits of solitude.

VII. That vainglory, when it has been thrown down, rises again to fight more violently.

VIII. That vainglory does not subside either in the desert or by reason of age.

IX. That vainglory is more dangerous when it is mixed with virtues.

X. The example of King Hezekiah and how he was felled by the dart of vainglory.

XI. The example of King Uzziah, who was overcome when he was struck by the same disease.

XII. Different texts against vainglory.

XIII. In what ways vainglory strikes a monk.

XIV. How vainglory suggests that clerical rank is to be sought after.

XV. How vainglory makes the mind drunk.

XVI. On the person whom an old man, when he came by, found in his cell deluded by the emptiness of vainglory.

XVII. That vices cannot be cured if their roots and causes have not been disclosed.

XVIII. That a monk must avoid women and bishops.

XIX. The remedies with which we can overcome vainglory.

I. Our seventh struggle is against the spirit of κενοδοξια, which we can refer to as vain or empty glory. It is multiform, varied, and subtle, such that it can hardly be seen or noticed by the sharpest eyes, to say nothing of being guarded against.

II. For it strikes the monk not only in his carnal part, as the other vices do, but also in his spiritual part, pressing itself into the mind with its subtle wickedness in such a way that persons who could not be deceived by carnal vices are all the more brutally hurt as a result of their spiritual successes. The harder it is to guard against, the more dangerous it is in the conflict. For with all the other vices the struggle is clearer and more open; with each one of them the provoking agent is weakened and departs when he is faced with inflexible resistance, and from then on the defeated adversary is that much feebler when he makes trial of his conqueror. But, when this one has struck the mind with carnal pride and has been turned back by defensive resistance, it changes its previous garb and appearance, like the multiform evil that it is, and once again attempts to stab and slay its conqueror under the guise of virtue.

III. For the other vices and disturbances are known to be uniform and simple, but this one is multifarious, multiform, and varied, and it engages the one fighting it on all sides and its conqueror from every angle. It seeks to wound the soldier of Christ in dress and in appearance, in bearing, in speech, in work, in vigils, in

fasts, in prayer, in reclusion, in reading, in knowledge, in silence, in obedience, in humility, and in long-suffering. Like a very dangerous rock submerged under swelling waves, it threatens with an unforeseen and miserable shipwreck those who sail with a favorable wind, so long as no care is taken and no foresight is exercised.

IV. And so, the one who wants to proceed along the royal road by means of "the arms of righteousness on the right hand and on the left"[1] must, in accordance with the Apostle's teaching, pass "through glory and dishonor, through bad reputation and good reputation,"[2] and with great caution set out upon the path of virtue, amid the swelling billows of trial, with discretion as a guide and with the Spirit of the Lord wafting over us. Then, if we turn ever so little to the right or to the left, we shall know that we shall soon come to grief upon dangerous rocks. And so we are warned by the most wise Solomon: "Do not turn to the right or to the left."[3] This means that you must not let yourself be flattered by your virtues or puffed up by the spiritual successes on your right, nor wander off to the path of vice on your left and, according to the Apostle, look there for glory in your shame.[4] For when he has been unable to beget κ ε ν ο δ ο ξ ι α in a person with modest and neat clothing, he tries to inculcate it with dirty, uncared-for, and mean clothing; him whom he could not cast down with honors he overthrows with humiliations; and him whom he has not succeeded in puffing up with the splendor of knowledge and fine speech he destroys with the gravity of silence. If a person fasts openly, he is struck with vain boastfulness; if he conceals it out of disdain for boastfulness, he is struck with the same vice of pride. Lest he be sullied by the contamination of vainglory, he avoids saying too many prayers under the gaze of the brothers; and, although he does this secretly and no one is aware of his deed, he does not escape the stings of vanity.

V. The elders well describe the nature of this malady as similar

to an onion or to those bulbs that, when one skin is peeled off, are seen to have another, and as often as they are stripped they are found to be covered.

VI. Even in solitude it does not cease to follow the person who, because of vanity, has fled the company of every mortal; the more someone seeks to avoid the whole world, the more hotly it pursues him. One it attempts to puff up because he is especially patient in his toiling and laboring, another because he is very prompt to obey, still another because he exceeds his fellows in humility. One is tried because of his great knowledge, another because he reads much, still another because of his frequent vigils. Nor does this malady seek to hurt anyone except by way of his virtues, putting out dangerous stumbling blocks precisely where the rewards of life are gained. Indeed, for those who desire to proceed along the way of holiness and perfection, enemies lie in wait nowhere else than upon the path that they are taking, and there they hide their deceitful traps. This is in accordance with the words of blessed David: "On the path where I was walking they hid a trap for me."[5] Thus, as we go along the very path of virtue and head toward "the prize of our heavenly calling,"[6] we may be puffed up by our successes, stumble with the feet of our soul in bonds, and fall shackled, due to the traps of vainglory. And so it happens that, although we could not be overcome in direct combat with our adversary, we are conquered by the loftiness of our triumph, or else (and this is another form of deceitfulness) we exceed the limits of our abstinence and of our capability and, with the onset of bodily exhaustion, we no longer persevere on our course.

VII. All the other vices weaken when they have been overcome, and once they have been conquered they grow feebler with each passing day, diminishing and subsiding with respect to both place and time, or at least they are more easily guarded against and avoided when they are opposed by their opposite virtues. But when this one has been thrown down it rises again to fight more

violently, and when it is thought to be destroyed it recovers, all the more alive for having died. The other kinds of vices are accustomed to attack only those whom they can overcome in the struggle. But this one pursues its conquerors all the more hotly, and the more forcefully it has been struck the more vehemently does it wage its assault in the very pride of victory. Such is the enemy's clever subtlety that it causes the soldier of Christ, whom he could not overcome with hostile arms, to fall by his own weapons.

VIII. Other vices, as we have said, sometimes relent if the location is favorable, and they usually slacken and diminish if the matter of sin and the occasion for it and the possibility of it have been removed. But this one penetrates the desert along with him who is fleeing, and neither can it be excluded from a given place nor does it weaken if matter has been taken away. For in no other way is it enlivened than by the virtuous successes of the one whom it assails. Certain ones, too, as we have mentioned, sometimes lose their strength and disappear over the course of time. But length of time does not only not thwart this one, unless it is accompanied by productive busyness and prudent discretion, but even piles up for it more fuel for vanity.

IX. Finally, the other disturbances are easily overcome and guarded against when they are opposed by their contrary virtues and are fought, so to speak, in the open and in the clear light of day. But this one, mingled with the virtues and entangled in the fray, contends fiercely as it were in the dark of night and deceives the unthinking and the incautious.

X. 1. For thus we read that Hezekiah, the king of Judah, a man of consummate righteousness in all respects and approved by the testimony of Holy Scripture,[7] was, after innumerable commendations of his virtue, felled by a single dart of pride, and he who had been able with one prayer[8] to obtain the destruction of 185,000 members of the Assyrian army, when an angel wiped them out in the night,[9] was overcome by boastful vanity. Not to go

through the lengthy list of his virtues, which it would be tedious to repeat, let me say this one thing about him: After the end of his life had been determined and the day of his death had been set by a decree of the Lord, he deserved by a single prayer to exceed the measure of his life by fifteen years. The sun went back the ten steps that it had already shone upon as it was setting, and on its return the shadow fled the space that it had taken over when the sun departed; and so, by an unheard-of miracle and contrary to the established laws of nature, it gave a doubled day to the whole world.10

2. After so many and such astonishing signs, and after such considerable proofs of virtue, listen to Scripture tell of how he fell as a result of his own successes: "In those days," it says, "Hezekiah was sick unto death, and he prayed to the Lord, and the Lord heard him and granted him a sign"11—namely, what we read in the Fourth Book of Kings was granted through Isaiah the prophet with respect to the sun's return. "But," it says, "he made no return in proportion to the benefits that he had received, because his heart grew proud. And wrath went out against him and against Judah and Jerusalem, and thereupon he humbled himself, because his heart had grown proud, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And so the wrath of the Lord did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah."12

3. How dangerous, how grave is the disease of pride! Such righteousness, so many virtues, such faith and devotion, which deserved to change nature itself and the laws of the whole world—this was all destroyed by a single act of pride, in such a way that he would have been the immediate object of the Lord's wrath, and all his virtues would have been consigned to oblivion just as if they had never existed, had he not placated it by resuming his humility. Thus he who had, at the impulse of pride, fallen from so lofty a height of virtuousness could not mount once again to the summit that he had lost except by retracing the steps of humility.

Do you want to have another example of a similar downfall?

XI. Uzziah, the ancestor of the king of whom we have been speaking, is himself also praised in every respect by the testimony of Scripture.13 But after publishing his virtues at length and after the innumerable triumphs that he carried off by reason of his devotion and faith, learn how he was felled by prideful vainglory: "The name of Uzziah went forth," it says, "because the Lord helped him and had strengthened him. And when he was strengthened, his heart grew proud to his own destruction, and he neglected the Lord his God."14 You have here another example of a most notable downfall, and you see two men, so righteous and so perfect, who were undone by their own triumphs and victories. From this you may understand how dangerous successes in favorable affairs can be—so much so that those who could not be broken by adversity are all the more harshly crushed by prosperity if they are heedless, and those who have come through crises, who were in conflict or on the verge of death, succumb to their own victories and triumphs.

XII. Hence the Apostle warns: "Do not be desirous of empty glory."15 And the Lord castigates the Pharisees when he says: "How can you believe, you who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that is from God alone?"16 Of these too blessed David says with a threat: "God has scattered the bones of those who please men."17

XIII. This is often what puffs up the minds of beginners and of those who have as yet not made much progress in spiritual virtue and in knowledge—when they sing melodiously because of the quality of their voices, or when they are either emaciated or good looking, or when they have rich and famous relatives, or when they have disdained military service and honors. Sometimes it even persuades a person that he would very easily have acquired dignities and riches, which in fact he could probably never have gotten hold of, had he only persevered in the world; it inflates him

with a vain hope about uncertainties, and it fills him with boastful vanity about things that he never possessed, as if he had despised them.

XIV. But sometimes it suggests the clerical rank and a desire for the priesthood or the diaconate. It makes out that, even if a person has achieved this unwillingly, he will be filled with such holiness and strictness as even to be able to offer examples of holiness to other priests, and that he will win over many people thanks not only to his way of life but also to his teaching and discourse. Even when a person is staying in the desert or in his cell it causes him to picture himself going around to different people's homes and monasteries and obtaining the conversion of the many who have been inspired by his imaginary exhortations.

XV. And so the unhappy soul is deluded by this kind of vanity as if by an all-pervading stupor, such that it is filled with the enticing pleasure of numerous thoughts of this sort. And as a result of these false images it is incapable of taking notice even of the deeds and the brothers that are present to it, so long as it delights to cling to what it has wakefully dreamed up, as if it were true, in its wandering thoughts.

XVI. I remember a certain old man from the time when I was living in the desert of Skete. He was going to a certain brother's cell in order to pay him a visit, and when he got near the door he heard him inside muttering something. Wanting to know what he was reading from Scripture or what, as the custom is, he was going over by memory, he stood still for a little while. And when this most devout interloper focused his hearing and listened more carefully, he discovered that he was so much at the mercy of this spirit's onslaught as to believe that he was in a church and exhorting a congregation with a sermon. And when the old man, still standing near, heard him finish his discourse and then, changing his role, announce the dismissal of the catechumens as if he were a deacon, he at once knocked on the door. The man came

out, greeting the old man with the customary reverence and bringing him in. Since the realization of what had been in his mind was troubling him, he asked how long ago he had come, in case he were scandalized had he been standing at the door for a long time. The old man replied in a pleasantly amused manner: "I only arrived," he said, "when you were announcing the dismissal of the catechumens."

XVII. 1. I considered it necessary to insert these things into this little work so that, having been instructed not only abstractly but also by examples as to how to avoid the numerous snares and traps of the enemy, we could be all the more cautious concerning the force of the onslaughts and the arrangement of the vices that afflict the wretched soul. For these things are raised in indiscriminate fashion by the Egyptian fathers so that, as those who still put up with them, they may by telling them expose and lay bare all the struggles with the vices that the younger men endure and will continue to endure. Once there have been explained to them the illusions of all the passions to which beginners and fervent spirits are subject, they will become acquainted with the secrets of their struggles. Looking at them as in a mirror and having been taught the causes of and the remedies for the vices by which they are troubled, they will also learn about future contests before they occur, and they will be instructed as to how they should watch out for them, meet them, and fight against them. 2. As is the case with the most skilled physicians, who not only heal present ills but also confront future ones with shrewd expertise and forestall them with prescriptions and salutary potions, so also these true physicians of souls destroy, with a spiritual conference as with some heavenly medicine, maladies of the heart just as they are about to emerge, not allowing them to grow in the minds of the young men but disclosing to them both the causes of the passions that threaten them and the means of acquiring health.

XVIII. In this context, here is an old saying of the fathers that is

still current and that I, who could not avoid my own sister or escape the bishop's hand, am unable to utter without embarrassment: A monk must by all means flee from women and bishops. For neither permit him, when once they have bent him to familiarity with themselves, to devote himself any longer to the quiet of his cell or to cling with most pure eyes, through insight into spiritual matters, to divine theoria.

XIX. 1. And so the athlete of Christ, who wishes to engage lawfully in the true and spiritual contest, must make every effort to overcome this multiform and varied beast. When it attacks us on all sides like some multifarious evil, we shall be able to put it off with a remedy such as thinking about the words of David: "The Lord has scattered the bones of those who please men." First, we must not allow ourselves to do anything at the behest of vanity or for the sake of acquiring empty glory. Then we must attempt to maintain by a consistent observance those things that we have begun well, lest the disease of vainglory steal in later on and bring to naught all the fruit of our labors. Too, we must strive utterly to reject as the stuff of boastfulness whatever is not generally accepted and practiced as part of the way of life of the brothers, and we must also avoid those things that could set us apart from others and that would gain us praise from human beings, as if we were the only ones who could do them. 2. For it is especially by these indications that the deadly contagion of vainglory will be shown to cling to us. We shall be able to escape from it very easily if we realize not only that we shall lose the fruits of all the works that we have accomplished at the behest of vainglory but also that, having made ourselves guilty of a great crime, we shall suffer the eternal punishment of the sacrilegious inasmuch as we wronged God by preferring to do for the sake of human beings what we should have done for his sake, having been convicted by him who knows what is hidden of having preferred human beings to God and the glory of the world to the glory of the Lord.

Textual References

1. 2 Cor 6:7.
2. 2 Cor 6:8.
3. Prv 4:27 LXX.
4. Cf. Phil 3:19.
5. Ps 142:3.
6. Phil 3:14.
7. Cf. 2 Kgs 18:3–6.
8. Cf. 2 Kgs 19:15–19.
9. Cf. 2 Kgs 19:35.
10. Cf. 2 Kgs 20:1–11.
11. 2 Chr 32:24.
12. 2 Chr 32:25–26.
13. Cf. 2 Chr 26:5–15.
14. 2 Chr 26:15–16.
15. Gal 5:26.
16. Jn 5:44.
17. Ps 53:5.

Notes to the Text

11.1ff. For various instances of Cassian's dependence on Evagrius throughout this book cf. Weber 113–114.

11.3 On the image of the soldier of Christ here and in

11.7 cf. the note at 1.1.1.

11.4 On the image of the royal road, founded on Nm 21:22, cf. the note at *Conlat.* 4.12.5. On passing safely between the extremes represented by right and left, with discretion as one's guide, cf. also *Conlat.* 2.16 and 6.10, where 2 Cor 6:7 is likewise cited.

The subject of "has been unable to beget κ ε ν ο δ ο ξ ι α ..." is not explicit. It is put here as "he,"

with the implication that it is the devil. That ascetic practices must not be allowed to breed vainglory (as suggested here and in 11.6) is also noted in Jerome, *Ep.* 22.27. Surprisingly, perhaps, Cassian does not refer in the present context to Christ's words against hypocrisy in Mt 6:1–18.

Vice of pride: *Vitio elationis.* Here and elsewhere in this eleventh book "pride" is a rendering of *elatio,* whereas in the twelfth book the common word for "pride" is *superbia.*

11.14ff. On desiring clerical rank, cf. *Conlat.* 1.20.5 and the relevant note; regarding the present context, cf. Weber 63.

11.16 Skete was part of the Nitrian Desert, about fifty miles south of Alexandria and to the west of the Nile. Cassian is referring to his second voyage to Egypt, when he visited Skete. Cf. *Conlat.* 2 praef. 2.

On hearing a muttering from within the cell, the old man assumes that the brother in question might be reading to himself from Scripture. That it was not unusual to read aloud to oneself in antiquity is suggested in Acts 8:30; Augustine, *Conf.* 6.3.3.

Dismissal: *Missam.* cf. the note at 2.7.1. On the dismissal of the catechumens by the deacon, cf. Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London, 1945), 437–438.

11.17.2 A comparison between physicians of bodies and physicians of souls is a commonplace in Christian antiquity. Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.27.171; Gregory Nazianzen, *Or.* 2.16ff.; Chrysostom, *De sacerd.* 6.4; Julianus Pomerius, *De vita contemplativa* 2.7.1f.

11.18 This is the sole reference in Cassian's works to his sister *(germanam).* What it means precisely, however, is a mystery. This is followed by an allusion to his ordinations in

Constantinople and Rome, at the hands of John Chrysostom and Innocent I, to the diaconate and the presbyterate. Cf. Cassian, *De incarn.* 7.31; Gennadius, *De script. eccl.* 61.

Divine theoria: *Divinae theoriae.* "Theoria" is simply a Latin transliteration of a Greek word meaning "contemplation." Although it is used frequently in *The Conferences,* this is its sole appearance in *The Institutes.*

11.19.1 On the image of the athlete of Christ, cf. the note at 5.12ff.

TWELFTH BOOK: THE SPIRIT OF PRIDE

Chapters

I. That the eighth struggle is against the spirit of pride, and on its nature.

II. That there are two kinds of pride.

III. That pride destroys all the virtues together.

IV. That, on account of pride, Lucifer, from having been an archangel, was made a devil.

V. That the shoots of every vice spring from pride.

VI. That the vice of pride, although it is last in the order of combat, is nonetheless first in terms of time and origin.

VII. That the evil of pride is so great as to deserve to have God himself as its adversary.

VIII. How God extinguished the devil's pride by the virtue of humility, and various texts on this topic.

IX. How we too can overcome pride.

X. That no one can obtain the perfection of virtue or the blessedness that has been promised by his own powers alone.

XI. The example of the thief, of David, and of our call as demonstrations of the grace of God.

XII. That no toil can be compared to the promised blessedness.

XIII. The tradition of the elders concerning the pursuit of purity.

XIV. That the help of God is bestowed on those who labor.

XV. From whom we should learn the way of perfection.

XVI. That without the mercy and inspiration of God we cannot so much as make the effort to acquire perfection.

XVII. Various texts that clearly show that we can accomplish nothing that pertains to our salvation without the help of

God.

XVIII. That we are fortified with God's grace not only in our natural condition but also in the daily course of events.

XIX. That this faith concerning the grace of God was handed down by the fathers of old.

XX. Concerning a man who, on account of blasphemy, was given up to an unclean spirit.

XXI. The example of Joash, king of Judah, showing the deserts of pride.

XXII. That every proud soul is subjected to evil spirits to be mocked.

XXIII. That perfection cannot be attained without the virtue of humility.

XXIV. Those whom spiritual pride strikes, and those whom carnal pride strikes.

XXV. A description of carnal pride, and what evils it begets in the mind of the monk.

XXVI. That a person who has been poorly grounded slips daily into a worse condition.

XXVII. An exposition of the vices that spring from the disease of pride.

XXVIII. On the pride of a certain brother.

XXIX. The indications by which carnal pride may be recognized to exist in the soul.

XXX. That a person who has been made lukewarm by pride also desires to rule over others.

XXXI. How we can conquer pride and attain to perfection.

XXXII. How pride, which is the destroyer of every virtue, can be extinguished by true humility.

XXXIII. Remedies against the disease of pride.

I. Our eighth struggle, which is the last, is against the spirit of pride. Although this disease is the final one in the combat with the vices and is placed last in order, it is nonetheless first in terms of origin and time. It is a most savage beast, fiercer than all those previously mentioned, greatly trying the perfect and ravaging with its cruel bite those who are nearly established in the perfection of virtue.

II. There are two kinds of it—one is that by which, as we have said, those who are spiritual and very good are struck; the other is that which seizes upon even beginners and those who are fleshly. And although a harmful self-exaltation arouses both kinds of pride vis-à-vis both God and other human beings, nonetheless the first has special reference to God and the second pertains properly to human beings. With the help of God and to the extent that we can, we shall consider its origin and cure in the latter part of this book. For the present we have set ourselves the task of discussing a few things about the first kind, by which we said that the perfect in particular are tried.

III. 1. There is no other vice, then, which so reduces to naught every virtue and so despoils and impoverishes a human being of all righteousness and holiness as does the evil of pride. Like a kind of pestilence in its noxious universality, it is not satisfied with disabling one member or one part of the body; instead, it wastes the whole body with its deadly corruption and seeks to cast down and demolish by the most utter collapse those whose place is already at the summit of the virtues. For every other vice is satisfied with its own limits and its own end, and, although it may afflict other virtues too, it is nonetheless directed principally against one and especially oppresses and assails it. 2. Let us make what we have said more easily understandable: Gluttony—that is, the appetite of the belly or the desire to gormandize—corrupts the rigor of temperance; wanton desire sullies chastity; and anger destroys patience. Thus it sometimes happens that a person who

has given in to one vice is not completely deprived of the other virtues, but he is only cut off from that virtue which succumbs when it is attacked by its opposite vice, and he can keep hold of the others at least in part. But when this one seizes the unhappy mind and captures the citadel of the virtues set on high, like a most savage tyrant it lays waste and overturns the whole city from its foundations. It levels the once lofty bulwarks of holiness to the ground of vice, mingling the two, and from then on it permits no semblance of freedom to remain in the soul that has surrendered to it. The richer it had started out, the harsher the yoke of servitude to which it is subjected when it is stripped of every means of virtue by the cruelest depredations.

IV. 1. Here is how we can grasp the power of its most grievous tyranny. We see that that angel who, on account of his great splendor and beauty, was called Lucifer was cast out of heaven for no other vice than this one, and that, having been wounded by the dart of pride, he fell from the blessed and sublime post of the angels into hell. If, then, a single instance of pride of heart was able to cast down from heaven to earth such great virtue, adorned with the privilege of such great power, the immensity of his downfall demonstrates what care it behooves us who are girded in frail flesh to exercise. 2. But we shall be able to learn how to avoid the baleful poison of this disease if we seek out the causes and the origin of his downfall. For maladies have never been able to be cured nor remedies provided for the ill unless their origins and causes have first been investigated through careful research.

He, then, clothed in divine brightness and shining in the midst of the other supernal powers, thanks to the bounty of the Creator, believed that he had acquired the splendor of his wisdom and the beauty of his virtue, with which he was adorned by the grace of the Creator, not as the latter's munificent gift but by the power of his own nature. Made proud on this account, as if he did not stand in need of the divine help to preserve this purity, he judged himself

to be similar to God since, like God, he wanted for nothing. That is to say, he relied on the power of his free will, believing that by it everything that pertained to the perfection of his virtue and to the continuance of his supreme blessedness would be supplied to him in abundance. 3. This thought alone was his first downfall. Because of it he was abandoned by God, whom he did not believe that he needed. At once he lost his balance; he tottered, became fully aware of the frailty of his own nature, and lost the blessedness that he had enjoyed as a gift of God. And because "he loved the words of ruin"[1] with which he had said: "I will go up to heaven,"[2] and "the deceitful tongue"[3] with which he said both of himself: "I will be like the Most High"[4] and of Adam and Eve: "You shall be as gods,"[5] "therefore God shall destroy him forever, pluck him up and remove him from his tent and uproot him from the land of the living." Then "shall the righteous fear, when they see" his downfall, "and they shall mock at him and say: Behold the man who did not take God as his helper but trusted in the abundance of his wealth and prevailed in his vanity."[6] (These words could also quite justifiably be directed to those who believe that they can attain to the highest good without the protection and help of God.)

V. This is the cause of the first downfall and the ultimate origin of the disease that, once again by way of him who had let himself be cast down, crept into the first man and produced the weaknesses and the wherewithal of all the vices. For in his belief that he could attain to the glory of the Godhead by his own free will and effort, he lost even that which was his by the grace of the Creator.

VI. 1. And so it is very clearly shown from scriptural examples and texts that, although the disgrace of pride is last in the order of battle, it is nonetheless first in terms of origin and is the source of all sins and misdeeds, and that, unlike the other vices, it does not do away merely with its opposite virtue—that is, humility—but is actually the destroyer of all the virtues together, and that it tries not only the middling and the small but in particular those who

stand at the summit of strength. For so the prophet says of this spirit: "His foods are choice."7 2. Hence, although blessed David guarded the recesses of his heart with great care (so that he boldly declared to him from whom the secrets of his conscience were not hidden: "Lord, my heart has not grown proud, nor have my eyes been lifted up; neither have I walked in great matters, nor in marvels beyond me. If I did not feel humble";8 and again: "He who does what is proud shall not dwell within my house"9), he knew nonetheless how difficult it was even for the perfect to keep up this guard, and he did not presume on his own effort alone but, in order to be able to escape unharmed this enemy's dart, prayerfully implored the Lord's help and said: "Let the foot of pride not come upon me."10 And he was terrified and frightened lest there befall him what was said of the proud: "God is set against the proud."11 And again: "Everyone whose heart grows proud is unclean in the sight of God."12

VII. How great the evil of pride is, that it deserves to have as its adversary not an angel or other virtues contrary to it but rather God himself! For it must be noted that it is never said of those who are caught up in the other vices that the Lord resists them, or that the Lord is set against the gluttonous, or fornicators, or the angry, or the avaricious; this is true of the proud alone. For those vices only turn back upon wrongdoers or seem to be committed against those who have a part in them—that is, against other human beings. This one, however, of its very nature touches God, and therefore it is specially worthy of having God opposed to it.

VIII. 1. And so God, the Creator and Physician of the universe, knowing that pride is the cause and source of our maladies, saw to it that contraries would be healed by contraries, so that what had collapsed through pride would rise again through humility. For the one says: "I will go up to heaven." But the other says: "My soul has been humbled to the ground."13 The one says: "I will be like the Most High"; the other, "although he was in the form of God,

emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, and humbled himself and became obedient unto death."14 The one says: "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God."15 The other says: "Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart."16 2. The one says: "I do not know the Lord, and I will not let Israel go."17 The other says, "If I said that I did not know him, I would be a liar like yourselves. But I do know him, and I keep his commandments."18 The one says: "Mine are the rivers, and I made them."19 The other says: "I am not able to do anything of myself,20 but my Father who abides in me himself does the works."21 The one says: "Mine are all the kingdoms of the earth, and their glory, and I give them to whom I will"22; the other, "Although he was rich, he became poor so that we would be made rich through his poverty."23 3. The one says: "As eggs are gathered that were left, so I have the whole earth, and there was none that moved its wing or opened its mouth or made a noise."24 The other says: "I have become like a pelican in the desert. I watched, and I became like a sparrow alone on the roof."25 The one says: "With the soles of my feet I have dried up all the streams that were piled up."26 The other says: "Can I not ask my Father, and he will immediately give me more than twelve legions of angels?"27

If we understand the cause of the original fall and the foundations of our salvation, and by whom and how the latter were laid and the former came about, we shall learn from the fall of the one and the example of the other how we are to escape such a horrible death as that of pride.

IX. And so we shall be able to avoid the snares of this most wicked spirit if, in the case of each virtue where we have felt that we have made progress, we speak the words of the Apostle: "Not I, but the grace of God with me." And: "By the grace of God I am what I am."28 And that it is God "who works in us both to will and to accomplish, for the sake of his good pleasure."29 The author of our salvation himself also says: "He who abides in me and I in him, he

bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."[30] And: "Unless the Lord build the house, they who build it have labored in vain; unless the Lord guard the city, in vain has he who guards it kept watch." And: "Vain is it for you to rise before dawn,"[31] because "it is not of the one who wills or of the one who runs, but of God who is merciful."[32]

X. For the willing and the running of no one, however fervent and desirous he might be, could be sufficient for one who is girded with a flesh that resists the spirit, such that he would be able to obtain the great prize of perfection and the palm of integrity and purity, unless he were protected by the divine mercy so as to deserve to attain to that which he greatly desires and to which he runs. For "every good gift and every perfect benefit is from above, coming down from the Father of lights."[33] "For what do you have that you have not received? And if you have received it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?"[34]

XI. 1. For if we recall that even that thief was given entry to paradise on the strength of a single confession,[35] we shall realize that he did not arrive at such blessedness as a result of his running but that he received it as a gift from a merciful God. Or if we remember that two particularly serious and heinous sins of King David were remitted by one expression of penitence,[36] we shall see here as well that the deserts of his labor were not equal to obtaining pardon for such great wrongdoing but rather that the grace of God superabounded and that, once he had seized the opportunity for sincere repentance, it was this that destroyed the stuff of his grave sinfulness by way of a complete confession of a single word. 2. Likewise, when we examine the origin of that call and salvation by which we human beings have been saved, not, according to the Apostle, thanks to ourselves or to our works but by the gift and grace of God,[37] we shall be able to see clearly how the whole of perfection "is not of the one who wills or of the one who runs, but of God who is merciful." He it is who makes us

victors over our vices, when our toil and our running do not measure up to them at all and when the effort of our will is unequal to the arduous ascent to the summit of integrity, even though the flesh that we use has been subjugated. 3. For no affliction of this body and no contrition of heart could be sufficient to lay hold of the true chastity of the inner man so as to be able to acquire by bare human effort—that is, without God's help—the great virtue of purity, which is natural to the angels alone and native to heaven, since the accomplishment of every good thing comes from the grace of the one who, out of his manifold generosity, has bestowed everlasting blessedness and immeasurable glory on our slender willing and our brief and paltry running.

XII. For when you consider the eternity of future glory, the whole length of the present life is insignificant. All sorrows are put to flight at the contemplation of that immeasurable blessedness; like smoke they are reduced to nothing and dissolve, and like ashes they disappear.

XIII. Hence it is now time for us to produce an opinion of the fathers in the very words in which they hand it down—of those men, namely, who did not describe the way of perfection and its nature in boastful words but who, possessing it through their own experience and in most certain fashion, handed it down in deed and work and in the power of the Spirit. They say that a person cannot utterly be cleansed of his carnal vices if he does not realize that all his efforts and attempts are insufficient in view of the great end of perfection, and if he does not recognize that this cannot be grasped apart from the compassion and help of God, once he has been taught not so much by a teacher's instruction as by disposition and virtue and his own experiences. For however much effort may have been spent in fasting, keeping vigil, reading, solitude, and withdrawal for the sake of laying hold of the prizes of purity and integrity, which are so magnificent and so lofty, this

diligence and toil cannot of itself be sufficient to obtain them. For never will a person's own effort and human diligence be equal to the divine gift, if it has not been granted by the divine compassion to the one who desires it.

XIV. 1. I do not say this in order to nullify human effort or in an attempt to turn anyone away from diligence and intense toil. Rather, I declare clearly and most firmly—not by my own say-so but by that of the elders—that without these things perfection cannot be grasped at all, yet that no one can attain it with these things alone and without God's grace. For in saying that human effort by itself cannot seize it, apart from God's help, we thus assert that God's mercy and grace are bestowed only on those who toil and labor and that, to use the Apostle's words, they are given to those who will and those who run. This is also in keeping with what is sung in the eighty-eighth Psalm, in the person of God: "I have laid help upon one who is mighty, and I have exalted one chosen from my people."[38] 2. For we say, following the words of the Savior, that it is indeed given to those who ask, opened to those who knock, and found by those who seek,[39] but not that our asking, searching, and knocking are sufficient unless God's mercy gives what we ask, opens when we knock, and causes to be found what we are seeking. For he is ready, so long as we have offered him our good will, to grant all these things, inasmuch as he desires and longs for our perfection and salvation more than we do ourselves. 3. And so well did blessed David realize that good results could not be produced merely by his own industrious toil and efforts that with repeated prayer he begged to deserve direction for his works from the Lord, saying: "Direct upon us the work of our hands; yes, direct the work of our hands."[40] And again: "Confirm, O God, what you have worked in us."[41]

XV. 1. Therefore, if we wish in deed and in fact to attain to the true perfection of virtue, we must be at one with those teachers and leaders who did not engage in empty talk about it but who

grasped it through direct experience and who are also able to teach us, to direct us to it, and to show us the surest way of arriving at it, and who are themselves said to have come to it by faith rather than as a result of their labors. The purity of heart that they acquired also made it possible for them, most especially, to be ever more aware that they were weighed down by sinfulness, for their compunction for their wrongdoing increased with each passing day to the same extent that their purity of mind advanced. Thus they were constantly sighing from the depths of their hearts, because they realized that they could never escape the blemishes and stains of the wrongs that were intruding upon them from a multitude of little thoughts. 2. And so they declared that they hoped for the rewards of the life to come not by reason of their own works but on account of the Lord's mercy. They gave themselves no credit for the great circumspection of heart that they had in comparison with others, which indeed they attributed not to their own effort but to divine grace. Nor did they flatter themselves because of the carelessness of those who were lukewarm and inferior to them; instead they acquired an enduring humility by contemplating those who they knew truly lacked sin and were already enjoying eternal blessedness in the kingdom of heaven. And so, by keeping this in mind, they both avoided the downfall of pride and were always clear as to what they were contending against and what they were grieving over, in the realization that they could not attain to the purity of heart that they desired as long as the burden of the flesh offered resistance.

XVI. It is in accordance with their traditions and instructions, therefore, that we must strive after it and give ourselves over to fasting, vigils, prayer, and contrition of heart and body; otherwise we shall nullify all these things at the instigation of the malady in question. For it behooves us to believe not only that we cannot possess this perfection by our own toil and effort but that we cannot even bring into play those very things that we use for this end—namely, our effort, our exertion, and our labor—without the

help of God's protection and his inspiration and without the grace of correction and encouragement, which he is accustomed to pour mercifully into our hearts either through another or by himself, when he visits us.

XVII. 1. Finally, let the Author of our salvation instruct us as to what we should not only think but also confess in whatever we do.

"I am not able to do anything of myself," he says, "but my Father who abides in me himself does the works." In the person of his assumed manhood he says that he can do nothing by himself. How, then, can we who are ashes and earth[42] think that we do not stand in need of the Lord's help in whatever pertains to our salvation? And so let us also learn, as we think both of our own weakness and of his help at every moment, to proclaim daily along with the holy ones: "I was pushed and overturned so that I might fall, and the Lord sustained me. My strength and my praise is the Lord, and he has become my salvation."[43] And: "Unless the Lord had helped me, my soul would soon have dwelt in hell. If I said: My foot has slipped, your mercy, Lord, helped me. According to the multitude of the sorrows in my heart, your consolations have rejoiced my soul."[44] 2. Seeing, too, that our heart is strengthened by the fear of the Lord and by patience, let us say: "The Lord has become my stronghold, and he has led me out into a broad place."[45] Realizing as well that knowledge is increased in us when we progress in works, let us say: "For you light my lamp, Lord. My God, enlighten my darkness. For in you shall I be snatched from trial, and in my God I shall go over a wall."[46] Then, feeling that we have ourselves sought for the strength of endurance and that we are proceeding along the paths of virtue more easily and without effort, let us add: "It is God who has girded me with strength and who has laid out for me a perfect way. It is he who has made my feet like those of a deer and has set me upon the heights, who trains my hands for battle."[47] 3. And when we have acquired discretion, strengthened with which we can crush our foes, let us cry out to God: "Your

instruction has lifted me up to the end, and your instruction itself will teach me. You have enlarged my steps under me, and my feet are not weakened."[48] And because I have been strengthened in this way by your knowledge and power, I shall confidently add what follows and say: "I will pursue my enemies and I will overtake them, and I will not turn back until they are defeated. I will destroy them, and they shall not be able to stand. They shall fall beneath my feet."[49] 4. Again, recalling our weakness and that, girded with frail flesh, we cannot overcome our harsh foes, the vices, without his help, let us say: "In you we will scatter our enemies, and in your name we will disdain those who rise up against us. For not in my bow will I trust, and my sword shall not save me. For you have saved us from those who afflict us, and those who hate us you have confounded.[50] And you also girded me with strength for war. All those who rose up against me you cast down beneath me. You made my enemies flee from me, and those who hate us you confounded."[51] 5. But, reflecting on the fact that we were unable to conquer with our own arms, let us say: "Take up weapons and shield and rise up to help me. Unsheathe the sword and close off those who pursue me. Say to my soul: I am your salvation.[52] You made my arms a bronze bow, and you gave me the protection of my salvation.[53] For our fathers did not possess the land by their own sword, and their arm did not save them, but your right hand, and your arm, and the light of your face, for you took pleasure in them."[54] 6. Finally, as with solicitous mind we look over all his benefits with thanksgiving, that we have fought and have obtained the enlightenment of knowledge and instruction in discretion from him, that he has furnished us with his arms and strengthened us with the belt of virtue, and that he has made our enemies flee from us and given us the power to crush them "like dust before the face of the wind,"[55] let us cry out to him about all these things from the depths of our heart: "I will love you, Lord, my strength. The Lord is my stronghold, my refuge and my liberator. My God is my helper, and I will hope in him. He

is my protector, the horn of my salvation and my support. In praise I will call upon the Lord, and from my enemies I shall be saved."[56]

XVIII. Let us offer him thanks not only for these things, that he created us rational, gave us the power of free will, bestowed on us the grace of baptism, and granted us the knowledge and help of the law, but also for the things that are conferred on us by the daily exercise of his providence—namely, that he frees us from the snares of our adversaries, that he works with us in order that we may be able to overcome the vices of the flesh, that he protects us from dangers even unbeknownst to us, that he guards us from falling into sin, that he helps and enlightens us so that we may be able to understand and recognize this very help of ours (which some wish to be interpreted as nothing other than the law), that by his inspiration we are secretly struck with compunction for our heedlessness and wrongdoing, that we are most salutarily chastened when he deigns to visit us, that we are often even against our will drawn to salvation by him, and lastly, that, when he visits and moves us, he turns even our free will itself, which is readily inclined to vice, to better things and to the path of virtue.

XIX. This is true humility with respect to God, this is the unspoiled faith of the most ancient fathers, which remains pure in their successors up to the present day. This is the faith to which the apostolic virtues that were very frequently manifested in them, not only in our presence but even in that of infidels and unbelievers, bear a sure testimony. In their simplicity of heart they maintain the simple faith of the fishermen. They did not receive it in a worldly spirit by way of dialectical syllogisms and Ciceronian eloquence; rather, by their experience of an unspoiled life and by the most upright behavior, as well as by the correction of their vices and, to speak more truly, by visible indications, they learned that the nature of perfection is contained in it, and that apart from it neither the love of God nor the cleansing of vice nor the

improvement of behavior nor the perfection of virtue will be able to be laid hold of.

XX. I know a certain brother (whom I wish I did not know, since he submitted afterwards to being burdened with the rank of my order) who confessed to a certain very proven old man that he was being assailed by a most serious vice of the flesh: He burned unbearably with seething lust and with the desire to subject himself to an ignominious deed, against the use of nature, rather than to perpetrate it. Thereupon the other man, like a truly spiritual physician, at once perceived the inner cause and origin of this disease. Sighing deeply, he said: "The Lord would never have let you be given up to such a wicked spirit unless you had done something blasphemous against him." Having heard this, the first man immediately fell to the ground at the other's feet. Struck with the greatest wonder and seeing the secrets of his heart revealed, he confessed as if to God that by an impious thought he had blasphemed against the Son of God. Hence it is very clear that the person who is possessed by the spirit of pride or who has blasphemed against God—as it were insulting him from whom the gifts of purity are to be hoped for—is deprived of perfect integrity and does not deserve holy chastity.

XXI. 1. We read of something like this in the Book of Chronicles. For Joash, the king of Judah, was called to the kingdom by the priest Johoiada at the age of seven, and he was praised by the testimony of Scripture in every respect as long as the aforementioned priest was alive. But listen to what Scripture says of him after the death of Jehoiada and how, when he was puffed up with pride, he was given up to a shameful passion: "After the death of Jehoiada, however, the princes of Judah came in and worshiped the king, who was soothed by their attentions and gave his assent. And they abandoned the temple of the Lord, the God of their fathers, and they served groves and images, and wrath rose up against Judah and Jerusalem on account of this sin."[57] 2. And a

little later: "After a year's time, the army of Syria came up against him. They came to Judah and Jerusalem and killed all the princes of the people, and they sent all the booty to the king in Damascus. And although a very small number of Syrians had come, the Lord gave a countless multitude into their hands, because they had forsaken the Lord, the God of their fathers. Upon Joash also they executed shameful judgments, and at their departure they left him with great diseases."[58] You see how, by reason of pride, he deserved to be given up to disgraceful and filthy passions. For he who is puffed up with arrogance and has let himself be worshiped like God is, in the words of the Apostle, "given up to shameful passions and to a reprobate mind,[59] to undergo what is unfitting."[60] 3. And since, as Scripture says, "everyone who lifts up his heart is unclean in the sight of God,"[61] the person whose heart is puffed up with swelling pride is given up to the basest confusion to be made a mockery of. Thus, humbled in this way, he will become aware of himself as unclean through an uncleanness of flesh and a consciousness of impure passion, which in his prideful mind he had not wished to be aware of; the shameful blotch on his flesh will lay bare the hidden uncleanness of his heart, which he contracted through the evil of pride; and, once the foulness of his body has been made manifest, he who was unaware of his uncleanness because his spirit had grown proud will have proven to himself that he is impure.

XXII. From this it is clear that every soul that has been possessed by swelling pride is given up to spiritual Syrians—that is, to evil spirits—and is entangled in passions of the flesh. Then at least, when it has been humbled by earthly vices and is carnally sullied, it will recognize that it is unclean, although when it had been lifted up in lukewarmness of mind it was unable to see itself as unclean in the sight of God, having grown proud of heart. Once humbled in this way, a person will abandon his previous lukewarmness and, downcast at and embarrassed by his shameful carnal passions, will from then on strive to give himself more ardently to spiritual

fervor.

XXIII. And so it is apparent that a person cannot attain the end of perfection and purity except by true humility, which he should show first to the brothers and also manifest to God in the depths of his heart, in the belief that, unless he offers him his protection and help at every moment, he cannot ever reach the perfection that he desires and after which he is running with all his might.

XXIV. Let suffice what has thus far been said—as much as our slender skill was able, thanks to God's help—concerning the spiritual pride with which we said that the perfect are struck. There are not many who know or experience this kind of pride, because there are not many who strive to lay hold of perfect purity of heart, such that they can arrive at this level of battle; nor have they acquired the purgation of the vices whose nature and remedies we have discussed in each book. It is accustomed, rather, to strike only those who have overcome the aforementioned vices and who are already nearly situated at the summit of virtue. And because the most subtle enemy has not been able to conquer these persons with a carnal fall, he attempts to cast them down and overthrow them by a spiritual collapse, thereby striving to despoil them of all the deserts of their previous gains, acquired at great effort. But those of us who are still caught up in earthly passions he never deigns to try in this way; instead, he overthrows us with a crasser and, so to say, carnal pride. Concerning this latter, too, whereby we especially and people like ourselves, and in particular the minds of the young and of beginners, are usually endangered, I think it necessary, then, in keeping with our promise, to say a few things.

XXV. Once this carnal pride of which we have spoken, therefore, has settled in the mind of a monk who has begun his renunciation badly and lukewarmly, it does not allow him to come down from his former worldly haughtiness to the true humility of Christ. It makes him, first, disobedient and harsh; then it does not let him be

mild and courteous or permit him to be on the same plane as his brothers. Neither does it allow him to be deprived and stripped of earthly goods, in accordance with the command of our God and Savior.62 Although renunciation is nothing else than a manifestation of a dying and of the cross and cannot begin or take its rise from foundations other than these—namely, that a person not only know that he is spiritually dead to the deeds of this world but also believe every day that he will die bodily—it, on the contrary, makes him hope for a long life; suggests to him many long-drawn-out illnesses; produces embarrassment and shame if, having taken on poverty, he starts being supported by others' wherewithal rather than by his own; and persuades him that it is far better that his food and clothing be supplied to him by his own rather than by others' means, according to the text (which, as has been said, those who are dulled by obtuse and lukewarm hearts will never be able to understand): "It is more blessed to give than to receive."63

XXVI. Those whose minds are so mistrusting, then, and who, as a result of their diabolical lack of faith, have turned away from that spark of faith with which they had seemed to be enkindled at the inception of their conversion, start carefully holding on to money that previously they had begun to disperse and, like those who can no longer retrieve what they have once squandered, hoard it with an avariciousness that is all the more vehement. Or, what is worse, they take back what they had formerly given up. Or else—and this is the third and worst kind of wickedness—they pile up what they had never before possessed and, although they have left the world behind, are proven to have acquired nothing more than the mere name and title of monk.

Upon these flawed and badly laid beginnings, then, it is inevitable that the whole structure will rise in vitiated fashion from then on, nor will anything be able to be placed atop this foundation except what will cause the wretched soul to collapse in

a miserable downfall.

XXVII. 1. The mind that has been blunted by passions of this sort and that has started out in disgusting lukewarmness will certainly get worse every day and will bring what remains of its life to a still more disgraceful end. As long as a person takes pleasure in his former covetousness and, in the words of the Apostle, is under the sway of sacrilegious avarice (as he declares of it: "Avarice, which is slavery to idols" or "false gods";64 and again: "Avarice," he says, "is the root of all evils"65), he can never accept the simple and true humility of Christ into his heart—not as long as he boasts to himself of his noble birth, or is puffed up by worldly honors that he has abandoned in body but not in mind, or is proud of the money that redounds to his ruin.

2. All of this makes a person no longer content to bear the yoke of the monastery or to be instructed by the teaching of any elder; he will not only not deign to keep the rule of submission and obedience but will not so much as cock his ear when there is instruction in perfection. Such a great aversion to spiritual talk will grow in his heart that, should perchance a conference of this sort be held, he will be unable to keep his gaze focused on one spot but will cast vacant glances here and there, fixing his eyes elsewhere and on nothing in particular, as the custom is. 3. Instead of producing salutary sighs he will clear his dry throat and incessantly bring up phlegm; he will play with his fingers, fiddling with them and tracing with them as if he were writing; and all the members of his body will be so agitated for as long as the spiritual conference continues that he will give the impression of being utterly at the mercy of swarming worms or sharp thorns. Whatever may be said in a simple conference for the benefit of its hearers he will think is being said for his discomfort. 4. The whole time that the spiritual life is being examined and discussed he will be busy with his own suspicious thoughts and will not be on the watch for what he should take in for his well-being; instead, he will

anxiously look for reasons as to why such and such a thing was said, and in silence he will go over in his heart what objections he could raise against it. The result is that he will be completely unable either to understand or in any degree to be improved by anything that has been beneficially discussed. And so it turns out not only that a spiritual conference is of no use to him but even that it is harmful and becomes for him the occasion of greater sin. 5. For as long as his conscience makes him suspect that all sorts of things are being said against him, his heart will be hardened that much more vehemently and stubbornly and he will be provoked that much more sharply by the urges of anger. Therefore his voice will be raised, his speech defensive, his replies harsh and agitated, his behavior high-handed and capricious. His tongue will be glib, his language impudent and never at ease with silence, unless he has conceived a grudge in his heart against a brother; then his silence will be a token not of compunction or humility but of pride and indignation, such that it would be hard to tell what is more detestable in him—his pert high spirits on the one hand or his baleful and virulent glumness on the other. 6. In the former case his speech will be inappropriate, his laughter quick and foolish, his heart exhilarated in an unbridled and undisciplined way. In the latter, however, his silence will be virulent and full of anger, and it will be produced only so that the grudge against his brother may, through not talking, be drawn out all the longer, not so that by it he may demonstrate the virtues of humility and patience. And as the person who is possessed by pride readily hurts everyone and disdains to ask pardon of the brother whom he has offended, he also rejects and scorns the same when it is offered him by another. Not only is he not struck with compunction and mollified by a brother's apology, but he is even angered that much more gravely because he has outstripped him in humility, and a salutary humility and an apology, which usually put an end to the devil's stratagems, become for him the cause of a more passionate outrage.

XXVIII. I heard that a certain young man in this region (and it is a dreadful and shameful thing to recount this), on having been reproved by his abba because he had begun to depart from the humility that as a renunciant he had maintained for a very short time and was puffed up with diabolical pride, responded with the height of arrogance: "Must I be constantly submissive because I have humbled myself for a while?" The elder was so stupefied at this unbridled and wicked response of his and was caught so completely unawares, as if he had heard these words uttered by the ancient Lucifer himself and not by a human being, that, in the face of such impudence, he was unable to produce any sound at all from his mouth with the sole exception of deep groans and sighs, while reflecting silently within himself on what was said of our Lord and Savior: "Although he was in the form of God, he humbled himself, having become obedient"—not "for a while," as that other who was possessed by a diabolical spirit and by pride had said, but —"unto death."

XXIX. 1. Let us, for the sake of those who long to be instructed in perfection, briefly synthesize what has been said about this kind of pride and, as best we can, list a few of its signs, so as to point out to some degree its characteristics from the behavior of the outer man. I think it necessary to go over these things in a few words so that in summary fashion we may recognize the indications by which it can be discerned and grasped. Then, when the roots of this passion have been laid bare and brought to the surface, and have been clearly exposed to sight, they will that much more easily be able to be plucked out and avoided. 2. For this pestilential disease will completely disappear not when a tardy glance has been leveled at its pernicious commotions and noxious impulses, after they are already in the ascendant, but when we have an advance on it, recognize its shape, so to say, and cut it off with a farsighted and wise discretion. For, as we have said, its existence within is recognizable from the behavior of the outer man. By the following indications, then, that carnal pride of which we have

spoken is made manifest.

First of all, a person's talking will be loud and his silence bitter; his joy will be marked by noisy and excessive laughter, his seriousness by irrational sadness, his replies by rancor, his speech by glibness, and his words will burst out helter-skelter from a heedless heart. 3. He will be devoid of patience, without love, quick to inflict abuse, slow to accept it, reluctant to obey except when his desire and will anticipate the matter, implacable in receiving exhortations, weak in restraining his own will, very unyielding when submitting to others, constantly fighting on behalf of his own opinions but never acquiescing or giving in to those of others. And so, having become unreceptive to salutary advice, he relies on his own judgment in every respect rather than on that of the elders.

XXX. Once this gets possession of a person he slips downward in stages, and now the very discipline of the cenobium disgusts him, as if the companionship of the brothers were keeping him from perfection and he were being drawn away from the good of patience and humility by others' vices and failings. He longs to live in a solitary cell or else, as if he could be of use to many others, to build a monastery, and he strives to gather together those whom he can teach and instruct—a bad disciple becoming an even worse master! For when through this kind of pride of heart a person falls into the most pernicious and harmful lukewarmness and turns himself into something that is neither monk nor man of the world, he even (and this is worse) promises himself perfection based on his wretched situation and way of life.

XXXI. Hence, if we wish the summit of our edifice to rise up perfect and pleasing to God, we must strive to lay its foundations not in keeping with our own willful desires but in keeping with strict gospel teaching. These cannot be other than the fear of God and humility, which originates in gentleness and simplicity of heart. Humility, though, can never be acquired without poverty.

When this is absent, neither the good of obedience nor the strength of patience nor the tranquillity of gentleness nor the perfection of love can be laid hold of, and without these our heart will never be able to be the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, as the Lord declares by way of the prophet: "Upon whom shall my spirit rest except upon the one who is peaceful and humble and trembles at my word?"66 Or, according to the copies that express the Hebrew truth: "To whom shall I look except to the one who is poor and contrite of spirit and trembles at my words?"

XXXII. 1. Therefore the athlete of Christ, who is lawfully engaged in the spiritual contest and desires to be crowned by the Lord, must also and in every respect strive to destroy this most savage beast, since it devours all the virtues. He must be certain that, if it dwells in his breast, not only will he be unable to be rid of all kinds of vices but even any virtue that he seems to have will perish from its poison. For the superstructure of the virtues will never be able to rise in our soul if the foundations of true humility have not first been laid in our heart. When these have been very firmly posed they will be able to hold up the peak of perfection and love. In order to do this, as we have said, we must first and from the deepest reaches of our heart exhibit true humility to our brothers by determining never to sadden or hurt them. 2. This we shall in no way be able to accomplish unless true renunciation, which consists in being despoiled and stripped of all one's property, has been established in us by the love of Christ, and the yoke and submission of obedience have been taken up in simplicity of heart and without feigning, such that there is no desire alive in us whatsoever apart from the abba's command. This will not be able to be the case unless a person considers himself not only dead to this world but also senseless and foolish, and carries out everything that has been mandated by the elders without any discussion and in the belief that it is sacrosanct and divinely ordained.

XXXIII. 1. And if we remain in this condition there is no doubt that that truly tranquil and unchanging state of humility will follow, with the result that, having judged ourselves lower than everyone else, we may with great patience endure whatever is inflicted on us, even if it is insulting or harsh or hurtful, as having been brought upon us by our betters. We shall, in fact, not only endure these things with great ease but even account them as insignificant and naught if we keep ever in mind the sufferings of our Lord and of all the holy ones, consider that we are being tried with lighter pains because we are that much further removed from their deserts and their way of life, and realize as well that in a short while we shall depart from this world and soon, having put a quick end to this life, be their companions. 2. The contemplation of this is deadly not only to pride but to all the vices in general. Then, after this, we must maintain this same humility most firmly with respect to God. This will be the case in us when we realize that we can accomplish nothing pertaining to the perfection of virtue apart from his assistance and grace, and also when we believe that the very fact that we have deserved to understand this is in truth his gift.

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3. Ps 5:4.
4. Is 14:14.
5. Gn 3:5.
6. Ps 52:5–7.
7. Hb 1:16 LXX.
8. Ps 131:1–2.
9. Ps 101:7.
10. Ps 36:11.
11. Jas 4:6.

12. Prv 16:5 LXX.
13. Ps 44:25.
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17. Ex 5:2.
18. Jn 8:55.
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21. Jn 14:10.
22. Lk 4:6.
23. 2 Cor 8:9.
24. Is 10:14.
25. Ps 102:6–7.
26. Is 37:25.
27. Mt 26:53.
28. 1 Cor 15:10.
29. Phil 2:13.
30. Jn 15:5.
31. Ps 126:1–2 LXX.
32. Rom 9:16.
33. Jas 1:17.
34. 1 Cor 4:7.
35. Cf. Lk 23:40–43.
36. Cf. 2 Sm 12:13.
37. Cf. Eph 2:8–9.
38. Ps 89:19.
39. Cf. Mt 7:7.
40. Ps 90:17.
41. Ps 68:28.
42. Cf. Sir 10:9, 17:32.
43. Ps 118:13–14.
44. Ps 94:17–19.
45. Ps 18:19–20.

46. Ps 18:29–30.
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50. Ps 44:6–8.
51. Ps 18:40–41.
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57. 2 Chr 24:17–18.
58. 2 Chr 24:23–25.
59. Rom 1:26.
60. Rom 1:28.
61. Prv 16:5.
62. Cf. Mt 19:21.
63. Acts 20:35.
64. Col 3:5.
65. 1 Tm 6:10.
66. Is 66:2 LXX.

Notes to the Text

12.2 As we have said: The reference is unclear.

12.4 The fall of Lucifer is here attributed to pride, as in *Conlat.* 8.9f. Cf. the relevant note.

12.5 Crept into the first man: *In protoplastum serpens. Protoplastus,* the Latin transliteration of a Greek word meaning "first-formed," is already used to refer to Adam in Tertullian, *Adv. Iudaeos* 13; idem, *Exhort. ad cast.* 2. *Serpens* is undoubtedly employed here as a punning allusion to the serpent of Gn 3.

12.8.1 On the image of God as physician, cf. the note at *Conlat* 2.13.7.

That vices can be healed by their contraries, and in particular that pride can be healed by humility, is explained in Augustine, *De doct. christ.* 1.14.13. The idea is implicit in 2 Cor 8:9, quoted in *Inst.* 12.8.2. Cf. also *Conlat.* 19.14.2 and the relevant note.

12.9ff. This long passage represents Cassian's sole discussion of grace in *The Institutes,* and it is fairly cononant with the understanding of the matter that he demonstrates in *The Conferences* up to *Conlat.* 13.8.4, where he begins to emphasize human effort at the expense of the divine initiative. In other words, these chapters of *The Institutes* underline the primacy of grace not only in the actual accomplishment of good works but even, as in 12.18, in the very direction of the will. It is only in 12.14 that Cassian comes close to the opinion found in *Conlat.* 13.8.4ff., where there is a not altogether successful balancing act between human effort and divine aid. It should be noted that Cassian insists that he is relating not his own viewpoint but that of the elders; there is no reason not to believe that this was indeed the common view, although it was certainly Cassian's as well.

12.11.3 The great virtue of purity that is natural to the angels alone and native to heaven: There is an oblique reference here to Mt 22.30. Cf. Ambrose, *De virginibus* 1.3.11; Jerome, *C. Iovinianum* 1.36; Augustine, *De s. virg.* 12.

12.13 That a teacher's deeds must be taken into consideration in judging his authority, which is an idea that recurs in 12.15.1, is a commonplace in all ancient literature. Cf. the note at *Conlat.* 11.2.2.

12.17.1 In the person of his assumed manhood: *Ex persona hominis*

adsumpti. The reference to the incarnate word as *homo assumptus* occurs several times in Cassian. Cf. *Conlat.* 7.22.2 (with the relevant note), 9.34.10, 16.6.4 (where a similar term is used); and Cassian, *De incarn.* 1.5.4.

12.18 Those who wish the divine help to be understood as the law are most probably Pelagians, who identified law and grace. Cf. Augustine, *C. duas epp. Pelag.* 4.11.

12.19 Dialectical syllogisms and Ciceronian eloquence: There is a similar slighting reference in *Conlat.* 15.3.1f. Cf. the relevant note.

The nature of perfection is contained in it: Namely, in faith.

12.20 "The rank of my order" certainly refers to the priesthood, which Cassian held. Why Cassian wishes that he did not know the person in question is unclear. Is it because, as a monk, he accepted the priesthood? (Cf. 11.14ff. and the relevant note.) Or is it because he had once blasphemed and then became a priest?

The "ignominious deed" that is spoken of here seems to be that of a man's taking the part of a woman in sexual intercourse, which was looked upon with particular horror in antiquity. Cf. Augustine, *De mendacio* 15; Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York, 1988), 432.

That the proud person does not deserve to be chaste is an idea that is further developed in 12.21.3f. Cf. also the note at *Conlat* 4.15ff.

12.25 The definition of renunciation given here is a repetition of that found in 4.34.

It...makes him hope for a long life...: The "it" is casual pride.

The opinion of "those who are dulled by obtuse and

lukewarm hearts" is explained in 7.16.

12.26 The three attitudes to property attendant on a lack of faith in the monk are also mentioned, with some variation, in 7.14 and *Conlat.* 5.11.6.

12.27.3 This description of nervous behavior at a conference recalls 2.10.1 and *Conlat.* 23.6.3.

12.31 The first citation of Is 66:2 is from a Latin translation of the LXX. The second quotes Jerome's version, the Vulgate. Cf. also *Conlat.* 23.8.2. "Hebrew truth" (*hebraicam veritatem*) is itself a phrase dear to Jerome's heart, found, among other places, in *Epp.* 48.19, 57.7, 82.8, 112.20, 122.2.

12.32.1 On the image of the athlete, cf. the note at 5.12ff.

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